

Russia Ditches Putin Mosaic in Army Church

By [AFP](#)

May 01, 2020



Reports on the church's interior prompted a storm of criticism, including from the Kremlin. **MBKh Media / mbk.news**

A mosaic featuring Russian President Vladimir Putin will no longer be displayed in a grand military church being built outside Moscow after the leader objected, a cleric said on Friday.

Russian Orthodox Bishop Stefan of Klin told news agency Interfax the committee in charge of the church's interior decoration "decided not to display it" because it was "the wish of the head of the country."

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The mosaic is still in a workshop and is likely to be dismantled, said the bishop, who will be the archpriest of the military church.

The Cathedral of the Armed Forces was due to open this month featuring wall mosaics depicting Putin's face along with officials including Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu in a panel glorifying Russia's annexation of Crimea.

The church's interior also depicts Soviet dictator Josef Stalin at the victory parade at the end of World War II. It was not clear if this fragment has also been removed.

Reports on the church's interior prompted a storm of criticism, including from the Kremlin.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that when Putin learned of the mosaic "he smiled and said: 'Some day grateful future generations will appreciate our achievements but it's too early to do this now.'"

The mosaic with Putin was intended to be a paean to the 2014 takeover of the Black Sea peninsula.

Bishop Stefan said the mosaic had planned to show the "bloodless joining of Crimea to Russia" with a medley of portraits of figures involved.

"If that seems premature to anyone, then possibly it is a good idea to avoid depicting this in a church," he said.

Depicting historical events is acceptable in some areas of a church, he said, nevertheless.

"That doesn't mean we carry pictures of historical events up to the altar."

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