

Russia Readies Border Closures for Military-Aged Men – Reports

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Cars queue to cross the border from Russia to Finland at the Vaalimaa border check point in Virolahti, Finland, Friday Sept. 23, 2022. **Sasu Makinen/Lehtikuva via AP/TASS**

Russian authorities could close the border for military-aged men as soon as this week to disrupt a mass exodus of Russians fleeing President Vladimir Putin's draft, according to media reports citing government sources.

This Wednesday, Sept. 28, is the most likely date for when Russian men eligible for mobilization will be put on a stop list, according to the independent outlets [Meduza](#) and [Khodorkovsky Live](#).

Both outlets link the potential border closures to Sept. 27 being the last day of annexation votes in four Kremlin-held southern and eastern Ukrainian regions.

If Moscow officially recognizes Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions as part of Russia, it would mean the Kremlin would almost certainly view Ukrainian attacks there as incursions on its own territory.

Western governments have vowed sanctions in response to the Russian-backed referendums they criticize as a “sham.”

According to an unnamed Kremlin source cited by Meduza, the Russian authorities could introduce so-called “exit visas” for Russian men of military age, with enlistment offices authorized to grant or deny permission to leave the country.

Khodorkovsky Live, also citing an unnamed source, reported that lawmakers could push through legislation specifying the types of reserves barred from leaving Russia.

Sept. 28 is not the only border closure date floated by Russian media organizations.

The Mozhem Obyasnit news website [reported](#) a retired Federal Security Service (FSB) officer said the travel ban could be imposed as early as Monday. Another independent outlet, Vyorstka, reported that Putin would make his final [decision](#) on the travel ban and possible martial law before addressing both houses of parliament on Sept. 30.

If enacted, Russia’s border closures would mark the first time Moscow has restricted emigration since the Soviet Union’s strict exit visa system was scrapped.

The Kremlin is looking to move swiftly to prevent men from leaving Russia after an “alarming” number fled Putin’s draft to neighboring countries, according to Vyorstka.

In a likely indication of the authorities moving that way, Russian Senator Sergei Tsekov issued a [call](#) on Monday to ban all military-age Russians from leaving the country.

The FSB recorded [261,000 men](#) leaving in the four days since Putin announced the draft Wednesday, according to independent news outlet Novaya Gazeta Europe.

Media in Kazakhstan, whose shared border with Russia is the longest in the world, [reported](#) Sunday that Russian border guards had already started turning away military-age men attempting to cross into Kazakhstan.

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