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Putin Visits Military Draft Training Center

By AFP

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kremlin.ru

President Vladimir Putin on Thursday visited a training center for mobilized Russians for the first time since announcing a partial military call-up on Sept. 21.

State television showed Putin visiting a shooting center in the Ryazan region, southeast of Moscow, dressed in black, shooting a newly developed sniper rifle and hugging military men.

Wearing ear protectors and safety glasses, Putin fired several shots from a Russian SVD sniper rifle, lying under a camouflage net.

Putin then appeared to start leaving but turned back and asked one of the soldiers:

"What kind of family do you have?"

"A daughter. Five years old," the mobilized soldier answered.

Putin hugged him and wished him "good luck."

Embed:

> "Удачи, Руслан". Путин пообщался с мобилизованным, пожал ему руку и обнял. Даже разрешил не снимать перчатку, но тот не послушался: «Положено так» pic.twitter.com/Uuch0EW5Io
>
> — Кремлевский пул РИА (@Kremlinpool_RIA) October 20, 2022

Military officials also showed Putin what mobilized men are equipped with, presenting him with a line of men, some of them with their rucksacks open to show what they are carrying.

"Turn around in a circle," one commander said to a soldier to show the Russian leader the men were adequately equipped.

"These are exceptional boots," he added, as Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, who accompanied Putin, inspected the footwear.

"Everything to fulfill the tasks," the commander said.

The visit comes after reports that mobilized men are badly equipped, leading to some discontent.

Russian state-run news agencies said the commander-in-chief also "observed practical exercises" including fire drills, engineering and medical trainings.

Shoigu, by Putin's side during the visit, gave him an update on the training of those called up in the draft, news agencies said.

More than 200,000 people have been conscripted into the Russian army since Putin announced the mobilization drive, the Defense Ministry said.

Russia's mobilization is aimed at propping up Moscow's forces in Ukraine after a series of military setbacks.

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