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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Quietly Inspecting Soviet-Era Bomb Shelters Nationwide – Bloomberg

November 11, 2022



Bomb shelter in Moscow. **Gennady Gulyaev / Kommersant**

Russian authorities have quietly launched inspections, repairs and cleanups of bomb shelters nationwide that have laid dormant since the end of the Cold War, Bloomberg reported Thursday, citing unnamed sources familiar with the efforts.

The unannounced campaign for state workers to check Soviet-era basement shelters in apartment buildings, schools and government offices alongside other protected areas is not motivated by specific threats or plans to use Russia's civil defense infrastructure, the people were cited as saying.

But it reflects the Kremlin's existential view of the war and its broader militarization of society as the invasion of Ukraine nears the nine-month mark, Bloomberg said.

Embed:

> Only officials left alive. Bomb shelters are being prepped for war in Russia but citizens are not supposed to know where they are https://t.co/n01M4vXeJN
>
> — The Insider (@InsiderEng) November 4, 2022

The inspections are also motivated by the chaos seen during Russia's "partial" mobilization — its first since World War II — this fall, with Bloomberg reporting that "the authorities are taking no chances with other war-related preparations."

Mikhail Vinogradov, the founder and president of the St. Petersburg Politics Foundation, said the campaign's secrecy makes it difficult to determine who exactly ordered it.

"This looks like a federal order," he was quoted as saying. "But it could also be an effort by all these civil-defense agencies to demonstrate their usefulness and that they're actually doing something."

The only public confirmation of preparations came from influential Security Council head Nikolai Patrushev in late April, when he ordered a full inventory of bomb shelters and their return to federal ownership in regions near the Ukrainian border.

Previous independent media investigations into Russia's estimated 16,500 bomb shelters found that many of them have been converted into bars and beauty salons and rented out by intermediaries. Their locations, meanwhile, are classified and hidden from the public.

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