The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# Putin Meets With Carefully Selected Group of Soldiers' Mothers

November 25, 2022



**Alexander Scherbak / TASS / Kremlin**

Ahead of Mother's Day celebrations in Russia on Sunday, President Vladimir Putin met with the mothers of soldiers recently called up to serve in Ukraine at his residence outside Moscow on Friday.

"I understand perfectly well that for you, as well as for so many other women in Russia whose sons are in the war zone, the attitude towards this holiday ... is linked with a feeling of worry and anxiety," Putin told the women in opening remarks that were published by the Kremlin.

The Kremlin didn't immediately reveal any more of what was said at the meeting, noting that it would only publish detailed exchanges with the permission of the soldiers' mothers.

In his opening remarks, Putin claimed to have spontaneously called up and spoken with several mobilized soldiers, saying he had been pleasantly surprised by their dedication.

"They did not expect to receive those calls from me and those calls, by the way, were made

through their mothers. This gives me every right to say that [the soldiers] are heroes. This is the truth," Putin said.

The Russian president separately addressed those whose sons had died fighting in Ukraine, noting that their pain was shared by the entire Russian leadership.

"For those of you here who have lost their sons, this [holiday] also, inevitably, brings up thoughts about this tragedy ... I want you to know that I personally, and the entire leadership of the country, share this pain. We understand that nothing can replace the loss of a son, a child," he said.

Most of the women invited to the meeting were later identified as people with links to the government, according to the independently-run Telegram channel Mozhem Obyasnit.

Among those identified was a Moscow municipal deputy from the ruling United Russia party, a local official from the Siberian republic of Tuva, and director Olesya Shigina, whose films have a reputation for being both pro-government and religiously conservative.

The Mozhem Obyasnit claims were echoed by activist Olga Tsukanova, a member of the Council of Mothers and Wives, an independent organization that lobbies for the rights of conscripts.

In a video posted online on Friday, Tsukanova referred to the women who had been invited to attend the Novo-Ogaryovo meeting as "pocket mothers."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/11/25/putin-meets-with-carefully-selected-group-of-soldiers-mothers-a79505