

Russia Bans Public Discussions of Army Strategy, Troop Morale, Mobilization

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Combat training of mobilized soldiers. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Russian authorities have [banned](#) public discussions of a wide range of non-classified military subjects that activists say will effectively prevent the public from learning crucial information about the Armed Forces.

The 60-point Federal Security Service (FSB) order, which enters into force Dec. 1, lists information that is not classified as a state secret, but which “can be used by foreign states, organizations and citizens against Russia’s security.”

Among the subjects banned from discussion are the structure and size of the Russian Armed Forces.

Other off-limits areas include weapons, troop deployments and training, as well as troop morale and crimes committed by members of the Armed Forces.

Mobilization and civil defense topics are also barred from being openly discussed, as are

assessments and forecasts of Russia's military and strategic situation.

The FSB list [mirrors last year's ban](#) on sharing non-classified information in Russia's defense and space industries.

It was revised last month to [include](#) information about the transportation of military personnel and ongoing military construction.

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"The purpose of the updated law with the FSB list is to make sure we don't see anything," Sergei Krivenko, the head of the Moscow-based NGO Citizen, Army & the Law, [said](#) Wednesday.

Those who share the information publicly risk being labeled "foreign agents," a Soviet-era designation with draconian rules and restrictions.

"This doesn't only refer to foreign agents, but also ordinary citizens who may be recognized as distributors of information detrimental to Russia," Krivenko told Sever.Realii, a regional affiliate of the U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) news organization.

Prominent human rights lawyer Pavel Chikov [sought](#) to dispel "unwarranted alarmism" about the list, suggesting the FSB is unlikely to start slapping the "foreign agent" label indiscriminately on anyone who discusses Russia's war in Ukraine.

"To date, not a single case of the [FSB's] list being applied is known," Chikov wrote on social media Thursday. "This of course doesn't mean that this will continue."

Also entering into force Thursday is Russia's expanded "foreign agent" law that will give Russian authorities extra leeway to declare citizens and organizations "foreign agents."

"To be branded a foreign agent nowadays, you don't even need foreign funding, foreign influence is enough," said Alexander Peredruk, who has represented several "foreign agents" in court.

Some lawyers believe that the 60-point list only applies to members of Russia's security services and does not limit public discussions of sensitive but unclassified matters, according to Sever.Realii.

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