

Putin Orders Intensified Hunt for ‘Traitors, Spies, Saboteurs’

December 20, 2022



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President Vladimir Putin [ordered](#) Russia’s counterintelligence services on Tuesday to step up their hunt for “traitors, spies and saboteurs” and prevent threats from abroad.

Speaking on Security Agency Worker’s Day, a professional holiday in Russia, Putin laid out “high demands” on Russia’s security agencies to respond to “new threats and challenges.”

“You must put a firm stop to the activities of foreign special services, and to promptly identify traitors, spies and saboteurs,” he said, addressing state and military counterintelligence as Russia’s war in Ukraine entered its 300th day.

Putin urged the Federal Security Service (FSB) and National Anti-Terrorism Committee to jointly take “special control” over strategic facilities like transport and energy infrastructure.

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To prevent risks from abroad, Putin ordered the FSB Border Guard Service to “step up” the surveillance of state borders.

The Kremlin has cast itself as a “besieged fortress” in a geopolitical standoff with the West throughout its invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's western regions which border Ukraine have regularly reported cross-border attacks on their territory, including on critical infrastructure, since the invasion started on Feb. 24.

In his televised speech Tuesday, Putin made the rare admission that the situation in the Russian-occupied regions of eastern and southern Ukraine is “extremely complicated.”

“The people who live there, Russian citizens are counting on you and your protection,” he said, addressing the employees of the FSB, the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Federal Guard Service, and the Chief Directorate for Special Programs of the four regions he claimed to have annexed in September.

“Today’s rapidly changing global situation and the emergence of new threats and challenges impose high demands on the entire system of Russia’s security agencies,” Putin said.

“This means that you need to significantly improve your work in key areas, and use your operational, technical and personnel potential to the fullest.”

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