The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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Russian State to Fund Sperm Freezing for Mobilized Soldiers

December 28, 2022



A mobilized Russian serviceman bids farewell to his partner. **Maxim Slutsky / TASS**

Russian reservists called up to fight in Ukraine as part of Russia's recent mobilization drive will be eligible for free sperm-freezing procedures, state-run media reported on Wednesday, citing a lawyers' association that represents military families hoping to secure state funding for the procedure.

Igor Trunov, who heads the Russian Union of Lawyers, told the TASS news agency that the government had approved his request for financial aid to pay for sperm freezing, the storage of biomaterial in a cryobank, and infertility treatment for soldiers.

"The Russian Health Ministry has determined the possibility of free preservation and storage of germ cells (sperm cells) for mobilized citizens in 2022-24 at the expense of the federal budget," Trunov was quoted as saying.

Russian law provides for the free use of stored biomaterial for military families deemed eligible by their health insurers, he added.

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Trunov said his union planned to apply for funding to freeze sperm on behalf of several couples who had been forced apart by the draft for Russia's military campaign in Ukraine this fall.

More than 300,000 reservists have so far been called up to fight in Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine in what was the country's first mobilization since World War II.

Independent media has verified the deaths of over 10,000 Russian soldiers in the 10 months since the military was ordered to invade Ukraine.

Western estimates place Russia's military losses to date at some 100,000 dead and wounded soldiers.

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