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Russia Defense Minister Shoigu Says Victory 'Inevitable' in New Year Message

By AFP

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Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. **TASS**

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Saturday that Russia's victory in Ukraine is "inevitable" in a New Year's message to servicemen, as Moscow's military campaign grinds through its 11th month.

"In the coming year, I want to wish everyone good health, fortitude, reliable and devoted comrades... Our victory, like the New Year, is inevitable," Shoigu said in the video address released by the Defense Ministry.

Shoigu said that, in the outgoing year, "we all faced serious trials" and that the New Year comes during a "difficult military-political situation."

Russia sent troops into pro-Western Ukraine on Feb. 24, saying it was protecting the Russian-speaking population in the east from an alleged genocide by the Ukrainian authorities.

Moscow's troops have suffered a string of setbacks on the ground over the past months with the Kremlin in September announcing the mobilisation of 300,000 reservists to join the fighting.

"The outgoing year will forever enter the military chronicle of the Fatherland, filled with your immortal deeds, selfless courage and heroism in the fight against neo-Nazism and terrorism," Shoigu said.

"We will always remember our comrades who sacrificed themselves while performing combat missions in the name of saving civilians from genocide and violence only for the right to speak Russian," he added.

Shoigu said that those celebrating the New Year, a major holiday in Russia and many ex-Soviet countries, on duty are "heroically fulfilling combat missions to protect the national interests and security of Russia."

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