The Moscow Times
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Russia's Largest Trade Union Calls Off Labor Day Demonstrations

By AFP

April 14, 2023



Labor union members gather for May 1 celebrations. **Yuri Smityuk/TASS**

Russia's largest labor union announced Friday that it was canceling its demonstrations planned for the popular Labor Day celebrations on May 1, citing heightened terrorist threats amid Moscow's ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

The decision comes as the Kremlin has stepped up its rhetoric around domestic security concerns, particularly since the deadly bomb attack on a military blogger that it claims was organized by the Ukrainian security services and incited by the domestic opposition.

"There won't be any marches or rallies in the capital, but instead a solemn meeting" with trade union activists, said Alexander Shershukov, deputy chairman of the Russian Federation of Independent Trade Unions.

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May 1 has been a widely celebrated state holiday in Russia since Soviet times.

Shershukov said the decision to cancel the demonstrations was due to "the higher level of terrorist threat, even in regions far from the places of the special military operation," using the euphemism for the war in Ukraine preferred by Russian government officials.

This week Russian-installed authorities in Crimea canceled military parades for Russia's immensely popular Victory Day celebrations on May 9, which mark the anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War II.

Military parades and memorial marches called the "Immortal Regiment" are held each year across the country.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/04/14/russias-largest-trade-union-calls-off-labor-day-demonstrations-a80834