

Putin Orders Measures to Reverse Mass Wartime Exodus

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President Vladimir Putin on Friday [ordered](#) officials to develop measures aimed at reversing the mass emigration of Russian citizens sparked by the invasion of Ukraine and the country's "partial" mobilization of reservists.

Putin's decree on amendments to Russia's state migration policy notes that the emigration of Russian nationals abroad "increased" in 2022 "due to changing socio-economic conditions."

"In this regard, additional measures are required to create attractive financial, social and other mechanisms for preserving human capital and reducing the outflow of the population of the Russian Federation abroad," says the decree published on the state legal information portal.

According to estimates by demographer Alexei Raksha, between 550,000 and 800,000 Russian citizens may have left the country last year. Analysts at Alfa Bank, Russia's private lender, have [placed](#) the wave of emigration to be around 1 million people.

This marks the largest wave of emigration since at least the fall of the Soviet Union, and possibly even since the Russian Revolution, when an estimated 1.16 million Russians fled abroad.

Russia's Economic Development Ministry in September estimated a decrease in the workforce — or citizens between the ages of 18 and 65 — of 600,000 people.

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Russia has [lost](#) over 23% of top programmers; state and private clinics have [reported](#) the departures of highly skilled doctors, and a survey by the Gaidar Institute among top managers and business owners in the industrial sector [revealed](#) a severe shortage of skilled workers on a scale not seen in the country's modern history.

A source familiar with meetings held in the Russian government in the autumn and winter [told](#) The Moscow Times that the wave of emigration "personally affected" Putin.

Those whom he had been counting on mobilizing were leaving the country without hesitation, and the authorities, observing the events in real-time, did not have the legal means to stop it.

"The exodus infuriated [Putin]. He gave instructions to prevent similar situations in the future and to cultivate patriotism in people," the official said.

The immediate response was the law on digitized summons, which was swiftly passed by both chambers of parliament and signed by the president.

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The law de facto creates a registry of citizens who are not allowed to leave Russia and significantly restricts the rights of draft dodgers, including a prohibition on selling property and driving a car.

Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council, has said that all citizens who left the country should be classified as "enemies of society," even if no criminal or administrative cases were launched against them. He also [called for](#) denying them entry to Russia unless they publicly repent or receive amnesty.

Federation Council Senator Sergei Tsekov proposed seizing the property of all Russians who have left the country, "regardless of whether they are celebrities or IT specialists."

In mid-January, State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin [called for](#) enshrining the confiscation of property from those who "insult Russia, its residents, soldiers, and officers" in the Criminal Code. Anna Kuznetsova, the State Duma's deputy speaker, [said](#) that this property could be transferred to orphaned children.

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