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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Pro-Putin Party Fields 100 Ukraine War Participants for Office

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A serviceman in front of the United Russia office in the city of Polohy, Zaporizhzhya region **Andrei Rubtsov / TASS**

More than 100 participants of Russia's war in Ukraine are running in the ruling, pro-Kremlin party's primary ahead of this fall's regional elections, the Kommersant business daily reported Tuesday.

Fifty-one of the 101 candidates in the United Russia party's primaries are combat veterans, 28 of whom are currently on the battlefield.

Another 47 candidates are humanitarian volunteers who have worked in Russia-held areas of Ukraine, and three more are doctors.

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An unnamed party source quoted by Kommersant expressed confidence that the nominees would become full-fledged candidates for this fall's regional ballot.

"It would be strange if the party announced that 100 combatants were participating in the primaries and most of them lost," they said.

Kommersant notes that some of the servicemen, who include contract soldiers, volunteers and those mobilized during last fall's "partial" draft of reservists, are campaigning remotely.

Many of the candidates are reportedly running for office for the first time.

Twenty-six current regional deputies have also taken part in what the Kremlin calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine.

United Russia's seven-day primaries kicked off on Monday.

Dozens of regions across Russia are holding elections in September, with members of 16 regional parliaments and 18 governors directly elected by the public.

United Russia says the "special military operation" combatants and volunteers are standing for office in 30 Russian regions.

Russia's regional elections, including in the Ukrainian territories Russia claims to have annexed, are expected to serve as a "testing ground" for the 2024 presidential ballot where Vladimir Putin is expected to seek his fifth overall term.

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