

Russia Backtracks on Pledge to Raise Minimum Draft Age

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A military recruitment event in Moscow. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia will keep its minimum conscription age at 18 despite a promise to raise the limit as part of the military's plans to increase troop numbers, a senior lawmaker [said](#) Friday.

A bill backed by President Vladimir Putin originally [envisioned](#) an increase in age limits for compulsory military service from the current range of men aged 18-27 to 21-30.

A transition period broadening the eligibility pool was viewed by critics as an attempt to compensate for troop losses in Ukraine by increasing the number of men eligible for conscription.

Andrei Kartapolov, the bill's co-author and chair of the Defense Committee in Russia's lower-house State Duma, said the new amendments would keep the lower age limit intact and only raise the upper limit to 30.

Related article: [Russian Lawmakers Introduce Bill Raising Draft Age](#)

“We decided to keep the lower draft age limit at 18 years because a lot of young men want to serve at 18,” Kartapolov told reporters.

The Duma’s Defense Committee backed the new version of the bill Friday ahead of its [second](#) and third readings, with an upper-house Federation Council vote and Putin’s signature now required for it to become law.

When adopted, the changes will be enforced in next year’s spring call-up, Kartapolov said.

Putin endorsed Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu’s proposal in December to raise the conscription age limit and increase Russia’s combat personnel by 30% from 1.15 million to 1.5 million.

Tens of thousands of military-age Russian men fled the country after Putin announced a “partial” mobilization last fall.

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