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# Russian Military Convinced Putin to Expand Draft Age Range — Reports

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Vladimir Putin with Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. **kremlin.ru**

The Kremlin was purportedly against amendments recently passed in the Russian parliament that, once signed into law, would expand the pool of eligible army recruits by raising the upper age limit for military conscription, the independent news website Vyorstka reported Thursday, citing multiple anonymous sources familiar with the matter.

Under current Russian law, all men aged 18-27 must complete a one-year term of compulsory military service, a requirement that has been in place since before the invasion of Ukraine.

But this week both the lower-house State Duma and upper-house Federation Council approved changes that would raise the age limits for this compulsory military service to 18-30 starting in January 2024.

The changes do away with the original amendments — which had been endorsed by President Vladimir Putin in December — that sought to gradually raise the lower and upper age limits for compulsory military service to 21-30 over a three-year period.

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The originally proposed amendments "seemed sufficient at that moment [in December 2022]," one source told Vyorstka, as Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu sought to increase Russia's combat personnel from 1.15 million to 1.5 million.

Likewise, the Kremlin has been reluctant to make any unpopular decisions — such as a second round of mobilization — that could harm Putin's approval rating, especially as the country prepares for next year's presidential elections.

"But, as the saying goes, they did the math and wept," the source told Vyorstka, noting that Russia's mounting military losses meant that the army would need to expand the pool of potential recruits to boost troop numbers.

"At some point, the Defense Ministry came to an agreement with the very top of the Kremlin, with the top official," the source added, referring to Putin.

When asked whether the unpopular amendments signal the Russian military's readiness to launch a new wave of mobilization, an unnamed Kremlin-linked political strategist said that Russian authorities are "simply ready for anything."

"The decision [about a new wave of mobilization] will be made by one person. But you can't get into his head," another source said.

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