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Putin Signs Law Raising Maximum Draft Age

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Russian servicemen undergo combat training. **Alexander Reka / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin has signed a law that raises the upper age limit for military conscription, as Moscow continues its efforts to widen the pool of potential recruits for its war in Ukraine.

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

The law signed by Putin on Friday expands the age range for this compulsory military service to 18-30 starting in January 2024.

The final version of the law does away with original amendments — which had been endorsed by Putin in December — that sought to gradually raise the lower and upper age limits over a period of three years for compulsory military service to 21-30.

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The originally proposed amendments "seemed sufficient at that moment [in December 2022]," an anonymous source close to the Kremlin told the independent news website Vyorstka in July.

Russia's mounting military losses in Ukraine have compelled the army to expand the pool of potential recruits, with Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu seeking to increase the country's combat personnel from 1.15 million to 1.5 million.

Putin on Friday also signed a law that bans draftees from leaving the country — which along with raising the upper age limit for conscription and the introduction of digital draft notices in the spring — has fueled speculation that the Kremlin may be laying the groundwork for a second wave of mobilization.

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