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Russia Has Created 520K New Defense Jobs, Putin Says

By AFP

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Putin meets with participants in the Everything for the Victory forum. **Alexander Kazakov, RIA Novosti / kremlin.ru**

Russia has created more than half a million new jobs in its defense sector to meet soaring demand on the battlefield, President Vladimir Putin said on Friday.

The Kremlin has thrown massive resources at its full-scale assault on Ukraine, with the defense sector accounting for much of the sanctions-hit economy's growth.

"In the last year and a half alone, 520,000 new jobs have been created in defense," Putin told a political forum with defense workers in the western city of Tula.

"In order to be successful on the battlefield today, it is necessary to react quickly and adequately to what is happening there," Putin said.

"So whoever does it all faster, wins," he said.

After months of combat that has failed to yield major territorial gains for either Russia or Ukraine, Moscow is throwing more manpower into the conflict and ramping up arms production.

Last year, it unveiled plans for a massive 68% hike in spending on the military — more than outlays for education, environmental protection and healthcare spending combined.

The spending increase has fueled demand in Russia's economy, drawing workers away from labor-starved civilian industries and pushing up inflation.

Unemployment has fallen to a record low and several non-defense sectors have reported a chronic shortage of workers since Russia launched its military campaign against Ukraine almost two years ago.

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