

Kremlin Says Russia in a 'State of War'

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. **Vyacheslav Prokofyev / TASS**

Updated with Peskov's remarks during Friday's press briefing.

Russia has found itself in a "state of war" with Ukraine, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov [said](#) in an interview with the pro-government newspaper Argumenty i Fakty published on Friday.

Moscow officially refers to its full-scale invasion of Ukraine as a "special military operation," seeking to downplay the impact of the two-year conflict on civilian life in Russia.

At the same time, thousands of Russians have faced prosecution under wartime censorship laws that ban calling the invasion a "war."

"Yes, it started as a special military operation, but as soon as this alliance formed, when the collective West became a participant on the side of Ukraine, it became a war for us," Peskov told Argumenty i Fakty.

"Everyone should understand this for their internal mobilization," he added.

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Peskov's use of the word "mobilization" follows rumors that Russia may soon launch a second mobilization drive to boost its manpower on the front line, as President Vladimir Putin has been emboldened by his victory in the 2024 presidential election.

Earlier this week, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu [announced](#) plans to expand the army by the end of 2024, including the introduction of two combined-arms armies and 30 formations.

Military analysts estimate that more than 200,000 soldiers would be needed for the new unit structures revealed by Shoigu.

Political analyst Tatiana Stanovaya [described](#) Peskov's comments on Friday as "a psychological threshold beyond which both the population and the elites will be called to task more than during the special military operation."

The Kremlin spokesman's remarks also came on the same day as some of the biggest Russian attacks on Ukraine in recent months.

"Russia cannot allow the existence of a state on its borders that has a known intention to seize Crimea, not to mention the territory of the new regions, by any means necessary," Peskov said, referring to the Ukrainian peninsula that Moscow annexed in 2014, as well as the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions that remain partially occupied by Russian forces.

Responding to journalists' questions later on Friday, Peskov [said](#) his comments to Argumenty i Fakty were not meant to indicate that Russia was de jure at war, but rather "de facto."

"There are no kind of legal changes connected to this, [as before] this is a special military operation," he said.

"But de facto, basically, this has turned into a war for us."

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