

# Putin Hails Russia's Huge Number of 'Terror' Convictions

By [AFP](#)

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Putin addresses Russia's top judges in Moscow. [kremlin.ru](http://kremlin.ru)

Russian military courts sentenced more than 1,000 people on terrorist charges last year, President Vladimir Putin said Thursday, referring to a massive wave of prosecutions during the Ukraine war.

Russia's secretive military courts prosecute captured Ukrainian soldiers, Russians accused of working with Kyiv or sabotaging Moscow's army, domestic opponents of the Kremlin and alleged radicals and terrorist groups.

"Military courts have a key role in deciding on criminal cases with a terrorist direction," Putin said in a speech to Russia's top judges.

"Last year, around 950 such cases were looked at, 1,075 people were sentenced."

Russia regularly sentences people over opposition to the war in Ukraine while convicting

captured Ukrainian soldiers on treason and terrorist charges.

The Geneva Conventions prohibit the prosecution of prisoners of war (POW) for taking part in armed hostilities.

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Moscow has also intensified its targeting of alleged jihadist cells since the March 2024 massacre at a Moscow concert hall that killed 145 people — an attack claimed by the Islamic State.

The crackdown at home is of a scale not seen since the Soviet era.

The OVD-Info rights group says 1,184 people have been prosecuted in Russia for their opposition to the Ukraine conflict -- including 258 for justifying "terrorism" and 58 for "acts of terrorism."

## **Steep rise in cases**

The Memorial rights group says Russia has 868 political prisoners, though its co-founder Oleg Orlov told AFP last year there were "a lot more" that campaigners did not know about.

Jailed for "discrediting" Russia's Armed Forces, he was then released in a prisoner exchange with the United States.

Putin on Thursday praised Russia's judges for their "dedication" in overseeing the ballooning caseload.

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He said Russia had created 100 courts and appointed 570 judges in occupied parts of eastern Ukraine, where Moscow has jailed an unknown number of Ukrainians for opposing Moscow's military offensive.

"They are completely integrated in the united Russian judicial system," Russia's Supreme Court chief Irina Podnosova told Putin.

She said military courts had seen a steep rise in overall cases during the Ukraine invasion.

"In 2024, they looked at 18,000 criminal [cases], 13,000 administrative [cases] and 9,000 civilian [cases]," she added.

Little is known of the fate of Ukrainians sentenced by Russian-installed courts in the four Ukrainian regions Russia annexed in 2022 — Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia.

Russian courts are known for their low acquittal rates.

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