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Russian Army Fully Launches Digital Call-Up System to Crack Down on Draft Dodgers

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Russian soldiers rehearse for the 2025 Victory Day parade. **AP Photo / Alexander Zemlianichenko**

Russia has fully launched a nationwide digital military summons system aimed at cracking down on draft dodgers by closing long-standing loopholes in the paper-based process, an organization that helps Russian army deserters said Friday.

President Vladimir Putin signed a law in April 2023 overhauling the country's draft system by introducing electronic summons and a centralized digital registry of eligible men. The system also enforces automatic travel bans for those who fail to report for duty.

"Previously, it was reported that the registry was functioning in test mode in only three regions. That notice has now been removed," said Idite Lesom, an exiled nonprofit that helps Russians avoid military service.

The registry allows authorities to issue summons through the online government portal

Gosuslugi, by mail or via the new digital database, eliminating the requirement for in-person delivery, which had made the draft easy to avoid.

Under the law, men who ignore their summons face travel restrictions, driving bans and limits on loans and real estate transactions.

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The digitalization effort is part of a broader reform of Russia's military registry. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov previously framed the changes as a way to make the system more "modern, efficient and convenient."

Critics, however, have said the move reflects Russia's urgent need for new recruits after its underwhelming military performance following a Ukrainian counteroffensive in 2022.

Putin also expanded the age range for compulsory service to 18-30, starting in 2023.

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