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Russian Orthodox Church Begins Training 'Military Clergy'

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Alexander Polegenko / TASS

Russia's Orthodox Church has launched theological programs in the cities of Yekaterinburg and Rostov-on-Don aimed at training priests to work alongside the military.

A master's program called "Training and Interaction of Military Clergy With the Armed Forces" was announced Thursday on the Yekaterinburg Theological Seminary's website. It did not specify when enrollment would begin or which courses would be offered.

The Church's head of education told state media that the first such program is already underway at the Don Theological Seminary in Rostov-on-Don, near the Ukrainian border.

Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Kirill approved the creation of the Yekaterinburg program during a synod meeting Thursday at Moscow's Danilov Monastery.

Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia's Orthodox Church has openly supported the war. According to Church officials, clergy have baptized 42,000

soldiers on the front lines, built 140 field churches and sent 2,000 priests to the battlefield over the past three years.

The Yekaterinburg diocese currently has more than 170 priests serving 239 Russian military and law enforcement units.

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