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Russia Forms ‘Demographic Special Forces Unit’ as Birth Rate Hits Historic Low

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Russian Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko. **council.gov.ru**

Russia has established a new group of officials, described as a “demographic special forces unit," in response to a catastrophic decline in birth rates across the country, the RBC business daily reported Thursday.

The measure was announced during a press conference by upper-house Federation Council head Valentina Matviyenko.

According to Matviyenko, the creation of the group makes family issues a top priority for the government.

“Today, any regional government agency can give you the name of the deputy minister responsible for demographics. A special demographic task force has been created. We can hope that we will return to our traditional values,” she said.

The group’s formation is in line with previous efforts to address Russia's deepening demographic crisis.

Despite extensive promotional campaigns encouraging larger families, public appeals from officials and Russian President Vladimir Putin and restrictions on abortion access, Russia has not succeeded in reversing its demographic decline.

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Data from the first quarter of 2025 reveals that births decreased by 4% year-on-year, with only 288,800 recorded.

The annual figures are equally alarming: in 2024, just 1.2 million children were born — the smallest annual total since 1999, and 3.4% lower than in 2023.

In an apparent attempt to control public perception of the crisis, authorities have restricted access to detailed demographic statistics, as well as overall population data for Russia.

In 2018, Putin introduced the National Demography Project, hoping to halt the country's population decline in six years.

Last year, Putin reaffirmed the goal of reducing the natural population decline to zero by 2030.

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