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Russia's Defense Ministry Launches Major Bureaucracy Overhaul

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Russian Defense Ministry. **Valeri Pizhanski (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

Russia's Defense Ministry has begun its largest internal reform in more than a decade, seeking to digitize the military's massive bureaucracy in order to free commanders from clerical burdens, the RBC news website reported Wednesday, citing anonymous sources familiar with the process.

Officials say the overhaul focuses on administrative and logistical functions — such as procurement, construction, healthcare and benefits to service members and their families — rather than combat operations.

To date, approximately 50 internal processes have been restructured under the newly created Department for Efficiency Improvement.

The long-term goal is to build a paperless, responsible and data-driven defense administration, according to RBC.

Among the most visible results so far are the phaseout of paper orders and records, which previously produced 2.5 million documents each year.

Handwritten decrees are being replaced with digital records that are entered once and reused across systems.

“There’s no need to waste the servicemen and unit commanders’ time on regularly filling out logs and copying from one to another when you can record data electronically once and use it repeatedly,” one source told RBC.

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The reform also targets the military’s long-criticized bureaucracy in handing out benefits to families. According to the report, waiting times for soldiers’ families to confirm their status have been cut down from five months to five days in 2024. Since May 2025, the certificates have been issued instantly through an automated registry.

The military has not disclosed the cost or timeline of the overhaul, which is part of Defense Minister Andrei Belousov’s broader digitalization drive.

However, analysts argue that it represents a strategic move to align one of Russia’s most opaque institutions with the government’s broader push toward e-governance, while maintaining tight control over its sprawling administrative apparatus.

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