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Russia's Vologda Unveils 9-Meter Statue of Ivan the Terrible

November 03, 2025



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The northwestern Russian city of Vologda has erected a 9-meter-tall statue of Tsar Ivan IV, better known as Ivan the Terrible, the Kommersant business daily reported Monday.

The monument, installed on Kremlevskaya Ploshchad near the Vologda Kremlin, will be officially unveiled on Tuesday, when Russia celebrates National Unity Day.

The bronze statue was created by sculptor Mikhail Krasilnikov, who previously designed an 8-meter monument to Soviet dictator Josef Stalin in the city of Velikiye Luki in the Pskov region.

The cost of the new project has not been disclosed.

The initiative came from Vologda region Governor Georgy Filimonov, who has described Ivan the Terrible as a "cultural and symbolic marker of Vologda."

The tsar ordered the construction of the city's main landmarks, including the St. Sophia Cathedral and the Vologda Kremlin, and once considered making the city the capital of his

personal domain under the *oprichnina* policy. Under this regime, members of the tsar's personal guard seized property for the state and carried out mass repressions and executions.

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The Great Russian Encyclopedia describes the *oprichnina* as a period when "autocratic power took the form of a terrorist despotism."

Yet Filimonov praised Ivan the Terrible as an "expander of Russian lands" and a "symbol of the Russian world."

"The Kazan Khanate, the Astrakhan Khanate — this is Orthodox missionary work, a symbol of the Russian world, dynamic, somewhat harsh and, in a good sense, an aggressive movement forward," the governor said, calling the tsar a "powerful warrior, autocrat and conqueror."

Filimonov previously backed a statue of Stalin that was unveiled last year. He justified the move as a response to "public demand," noting that Stalin had spent several months in exile in the city in the early 20th century.

The reception room in Filimonov's office is decorated with portraits of Stalin, Lenin, NKVD chief Lavrenty Beria and Cheka founder Felix Dzerzhinsky, as well as a painting depicting the governor shaking Stalin's hand.

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