The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Putin Casts Ukraine War as 'Sacred Mission' in Orthodox Christmas Remarks

January 07, 2026



kremlin.ru

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Russian soldiers were carrying out a sacred mission comparable to that of Jesus Christ as he marked the Orthodox Christmas holiday on Wednesday.

Putin attended a midnight Christmas service with members of the military and their families at the Church of St. George the Victorious in the Moscow region, the Kremlin said.

“Today we celebrate the wonderful, bright holiday of the Nativity of Christ,” Putin said in brief remarks after the service, according to a Kremlin transcript.

“We often call the Lord the Savior because He came to Earth to save all people. In the same way, Russia’s warriors have always carried out this mission — defending the Fatherland, saving the Motherland and its people,” he said.

He said that throughout Russia’s history, soldiers had been viewed as people performing a

“holy mission” on God’s behalf, “as if entrusted by the Lord himself.”

Embed:

> Vladimir Putin, who has remained silent on Venezuelan ally Nicolás Maduro's ousting, attended a midnight Orthodox Christmas service at a church in the Moscow region alongside military servicemen. pic.twitter.com/oTJC6G8nLL
>
> — The Moscow Times (@MoscowTimes) January 6, 2026

Putin also addressed the children of military personnel, telling them they had the right to be proud of their parents, as Russians had “always” taken pride in their soldiers. He added that the joy of Christmas was shared by all Russian troops, including those of other faiths.

“We rejoice with them when they celebrate their holidays, just as we all rejoice together in our common victories,” Putin said. “As is well known, victory is always one for all.”

Putin has increasingly emphasized the role of the military and national unity in public remarks since launching Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

He again focused on the military in his New Year’s address last week, saying that “millions” of Russians across the country were standing behind those fighting in what Moscow calls its “special military operation” in Ukraine.

“The strength of our unity determines the sovereignty and security of the Fatherland, its development and its future,” he said, adding that “work, successes and achievements of each of us add new chapters to [Russia’s] thousand-year history.”

Western estimates suggest Russia has suffered hundreds of thousands of military casualties, while Ukraine has lost tens of thousands of soldiers in the war.

Indigenous peoples from Russia’s regions and ethnic republics have borne a disproportionate share of the burden of military mobilization.

The United Nations estimates that more than 14,000 Ukrainian civilians have been killed in the nearly four-year war and has accused Russia of committing crimes against humanity against civilians in Ukraine.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/01/07/putin-casts-ukraine-war-as-sacred-mission-in-orthodox-christmas-remarks-a91621