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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Widows, Mothers of Soldiers Killed in Ukraine Join Victory Day March in Chita

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Screenshot / RusNews

Widows and mothers of Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine marched in a Victory Day parade in the Far East city of Chita on Saturday, in what local media described as a first for the annual celebrations marking the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War II.

Footage published by independent outlet RusNews showed the women walking in formation across the city's central square wearing matching military-style jackets.

According to the Chita city administration, cadets from a local boarding school also took part in the parade, while women carrying portraits of dead servicemen closed the procession.

In video footage shared by the exiled investigative outlet Agentstvo, one presenter described the uniforms worn by the widows and mothers of the "heroes of the special military operation" as "a symbol of responsibility, loyalty and unbreakable faith in those who are now

on the front line."

"Behind every step of this column is faith, hope and love," another presenter said. "In every gaze is the pain of loss and immeasurable pride."

Embed:

Anthropologist Alexandra Arkhipova said separately that regional authorities in parts of Russia had received guidance ahead of the holiday instructing officials to avoid using the word "parade" and instead refer to events as a "ceremonial march."

Citing sources, Arkhipova said posters using the revised terminology had appeared in cities including Krasnodar, Ufa and Chelyabinsk.

The appearance of relatives of soldiers killed in what the Kremlin calls its "special military operation" reflected how Russia's annual May 9 commemorations have increasingly been reshaped by the war in Ukraine, now in its fifth year.

Russian authorities have woven the conflict into Victory Day ceremonies since launching the full-scale invasion in 2022, presenting the war as part of a broader historical struggle against "Nazism."

Russian authorities tightened security around this year's Victory Day events following a series of Ukrainian drone attacks and sabotage incidents inside Russia, while several regions scaled back or canceled public celebrations.

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