

Putin Wants to Draft 300K New Troops, Zelensky Says

By [Reuters](#)

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Zelensky said Russia could draft more troops in 2027 to reach an overall goal of 500,000.

<https://x.com/ZelenskyyUa>

Ukraine thinks Russia is planning to draft an additional 300,000 troops for its war effort after Russian parliamentary elections in mid-September, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

Moscow's forces are pressing ahead with an effort to capture the rest of eastern Ukraine's industrialized Donbas region, where its troops have ground forward at what Kyiv says is a great cost.

In comments to reporters released on Sunday, Zelensky said Russia could draft more troops in 2027 to reach an overall goal of 500,000, part of what he described as a “peripheral mobilization” targeting Russia's far-flung regions.

“We believe it will not take place in the central cities,” he said. “But I don't think they will be able to hide it very well.”

Parliamentary elections in Russia are set for Sept. 18–20.

As fighting rages around the strategic city of Kostiantynivka, Zelensky said Russia was losing a “maximum” amount of troops in its bid to advance into Ukraine's so-called fortress belt of eastern cities.

He also hailed recent gains by Kyiv's troops in southeastern Ukraine, adding that the amount of territory occupied by Russia and liberated by Ukrainian forces in 2026 would be equal.

Russia is bolstering its battlefield offensive with an escalating air war on Ukrainian cities made worse by a critical shortage of U.S.-designed Patriot interceptors.

Zelensky said the 264 interceptors Ukraine is expecting to have received in 2026 represent a significant drop from 2025, when Ukraine received 364, and 2023, when it received 675.

He added that Russia was aiming to develop a capacity to produce up to 1,300 ballistic missiles per year.

Over the summer, Ukraine has escalated a campaign of drone strikes targeting Russian economic infrastructure, including oil refineries and online retailers' warehouses, seeking to destroy infrastructure it says is central to Russia's war effort.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in comments on Saturday that Kyiv had opened “Pandora's box” by striking economic targets, saying Russia would hit back at Ukraine's “most sensitive economic sectors.”

Zelensky said Ukraine was facing another difficult winter of Russian strikes on its energy grid, a prospect that had prompted Kyiv's air force to ask for 360 missile interceptors for the season.

He also said he had reached an agreement with France on at least one SAMP/T air-defense system this year, and with Germany on the supply of about 600 PAC-2 and PAC-3 interceptors through 2028.

Ukraine's war effort is further complicated by a \$27 billion defense funding gap this year, Zelensky said, a result of higher-than-expected spending in the first half of the year.

At least \$8 billion is needed for “a normal start” to 2027, plus about \$20 billion more for military salaries, payments to families of the dead, as well as other financing, he added.

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