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# Meeting of Russian Pobeda (Victory) Organising Committee

28–35 minutes





1 of 4

Videoconference meeting of the Russian Pobeda (Victory) Organising Committee.

**President of Russia Vladimir Putin:** Good afternoon, colleagues,

Welcome to the regular, 46<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Russian Pobeda (Victory) Organising Committee.

### **See also**

This year marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of crucial battles in the Great Patriotic War and the Second World War: the pivotal battles of Stalingrad and Kursk, the liberation of the Caucasus and Donbass.

There is one other landmark anniversary. In August 1943, the resolution, On Emergency Measures to Restore the Economy in the Areas Liberated from the Nazi Occupation, was issued. Thus began a large-scale restoration of infrastructure in our cities, towns and villages.

The enemy had not yet been ousted from the country, but military enterprises too started ramping up production of tractors, sowing machines and civil equipment for plants and the construction sector – everything needed to overcome the devastating aftermath of the war.

I believe that the contribution of enterprises in dealing with this effort should be taken into account when reviewing applications

for the City of Labour Valour honorary title.

Eighty years ago, the patronage movement of the rearward cities for the liberated areas was launched, and special funds were created to help the people who lived there. All of this, of course, is resonant with the current situation.

The special military operation is ongoing, but many regions, large Russian cities and enterprises are once again providing assistance to facilities and entire towns in the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics, as well as the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions.

Large resources have been allocated for the construction of new residential buildings, schools, hospitals and roads. Humanitarian aid is being sent from all across the country.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone taking part in this work, including volunteers, state, private and social organisations, including the recently created foundation, Defenders of the Fatherland. Its offices have opened in all Russian regions to provide those in the special military operation and their families with social support, as well as legal and other assistance.

Many Russian regions are also implementing their own additional programmes to support veterans and the families of our heroes.

But I would also like to say the following: it is important to provide equal rights to all – I want to emphasise, everyone, without exception – participants in the special military operation: career military personnel, volunteers, contract personnel, mobilised people, law enforcement staff and officers who are taking part in the special military operation. Our people are fighting heroically, some of them giving their lives for Russia. They and their families must be provided with the needed benefits and support, including

those with war veteran status. This is a matter of justice and acknowledgement of special merit of the defenders of the Fatherland.

Colleagues,

The 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Victory is approaching. It is an event that calls for festive and solemn celebrations, but this is not all – most importantly, we must fill every activity with meaningful content, and we need to start the preparations now.

We will certainly discuss this topic in greater detail, consider every aspect at one of the committee's next meetings. But there is one project I would like to mention today and make a proposal.

A few years ago, Moscow's Manezh Exhibition Hall hosted an exposition, 100 Rarities of Russian Statehood, where the Federal Archival Agency displayed some unique original documents that reflected the most important milestones of national history. Many of them left the archival vaults for the first time. Even for history enthusiasts that display was almost a sensation.

I propose creating a similar project dedicated to the Great Patriotic War. The idea is to collect artifacts on key events, from the first battles on the border to the hoisting of the Red Banner of Victory over defeated Berlin, the most high-profile orders of the Stavka (Supreme High Command) headquarters and Leningraders' siege diaries, and Germany and Japan' instruments of surrender.

For an even deeper impact, trophy documents can be included.

I think that a demonstration of the Nazi command orders concerning the barbaric treatment of Soviet prisoners of war and civilians, or records documenting the crimes of Hitler's

accomplices and various collaborators will serve as a stark reminder for those who have forgotten history.

The No Statute of Limitations project team is working hard to investigate Nazi crimes in the occupied territories. Many cases stored in the FSB and Defence Ministry archives have been declassified, and they should be made available to the public.

Original documents are the most convincing evidence. Open display of the archives is a fitting reply to those who are currently waging a war on the past, often distorting history to accommodate the fleeting political interests of the day, and often personal ambition.

As is known, there are many such individuals today, there are representatives of this movement, to put it mildly, even in Europe, where many people have lost both their memory and conscience.

The world's approach towards the events preceding World War II, its course and its outcomes, significantly aids in understanding contemporary processes. New narratives and challenges of our time clearly show that Nazism was defeated in 1945 but unfortunately not eradicated. It is rearing its head in the form of Russophobia, anti-Semitism and the glorification of Nazi criminals. Blatant Nazi propaganda has become standard practice in the Baltic countries and even Ukraine, as if Nuremberg never happened. There are no international laws prohibiting such actions.

Furthermore, history is being weaponised in ideological battles, and we need proper means of defence capable of not only countering but also preventing attacks of this nature.

The need for this has been emphasised by veterans, historians



and members of fallen war heroes search units whom I have met with many times. The proposal to create a National Centre for Historical Memory has been raised multiple times. I asked that the issue be thoroughly examined and worked through, and today, I would like to hear about the results.

I believe we need such a centre. Instructions to this end will be issued based on the outcome of today's meeting. Please deal with organisational and financial matters promptly and without delay.

Let's move on to today's agenda. Please go ahead.

**First Deputy Speaker of the Federation Council, Secretary of the General Council of the United Russia party [Andrei](#)**

**[Turchak](#)**: Mr President, good afternoon,

From the earliest days, United Russia has been participating in the implementation of your initiative to confer the honorary title City of Labour Valour, and since 2020, we have been holding a popular vote in favour of candidate cities, helping to complete the necessary documents, process requests from workers at enterprises, initiative groups, councils of veterans, public organisations.

It is true that these initiatives bring people together and inspire additional interest in history in young people. In the cities that have already been awarded the honorary title, United Russia and the Russian Military Historical Society are working to determine the places for installing memorial steles, and we are working together with the Russian Military Historical Society to install them. Also, in parallel with the Ministry of Construction, we are working to improve adjacent territories.

Several options are always offered, and the final decision

on the installation site is made by people during an open vote. Mr President, we would like to suggest continuing this practice.

Today, steles designating cities of military glory have been installed in 34 out of 53 cities of labour valour. Today we are working in Yakutia. This morning a stele was unveiled in Aldan. Mr President, the people of the city asked me to convey to you their gratitude for recognising the city's merits. Veterans came up today and asked me to convey their greetings and wishes of health and our common victory.

Together with the Ministry of Digital Development and the Russian Post, we have already issued a series of 17 postage stamps dedicated to the cities of labour valour. This year, United Russia has been working on developing and promoting new applications for this high title. Almost a million signatures were collected from residents; there were petitions from veterans and public organisations.

Mr President, let me introduce you to the ten new contenders for the title of cities of labour valour considering the expert opinions of the Russian Academy of Sciences. These are Vladimir, Votkinsk, Nakhodka, Novomoskovsk, Podolsk, Prokopyevsk, Ryazan, Rubtsovsk, Ulan-Ude and Khanty-Mansiysk. The list includes both large regional centres and small cities, but all of them are united by the huge contribution of their residents to the victory, to ensuring the operation of evacuated enterprises and the uninterrupted supply to the front.

On behalf of the residents who campaigned, gathered signatures and voted, I am asking you, Mr President, to support United Russia's proposal to confer the honorary title on the ten cities

I have named.

That concludes my report.

**Vladimir Putin:** Thank you very much.

Mr Krasnikov, please, take the floor.

**President of the Russian Academy of Sciences [Gennady](#)**

**[Krasnikov](#):** Mr President, colleagues,

Today, at this meeting of the organising committee, I would like to report on the expertise carried out by the Russian Academy of Sciences to awarding the honorary title, City of Labour Valour.

Awarding this title to cities in our country is always a great event for their residents, and it is an important part of preserving the memory of the Great Patriotic War.

Over the last two years alone, the title City of Labour Valour has been awarded to 53 Russian cities. This was the result of a lot of research by scientists, historians and specialists who study archives and preserve the memory of our predecessors.

This year, the Russian Academy of Sciences has received applications for the honour of receiving the title City of Labour Valour from 28 cities. Based on the results of a professional, thorough evaluation, all of them received a positive evaluation.

At the same time, we propose concentrating on the following ten applicants: the cities of Podolsk, Vladimir, Votkinsk, Prokopyevsk, Ulan-Ude, Novomoskovsk, Ryazan, Rubtsovsk, Khanty-Mansiysk and Nakhodka.

Podolsk is a city of machine builders. From the beginning of the war, its factories were redesigned for manufacturing military products. Mortar weapons, ammunition and armoured hulls



for military equipment were produced here. For this, during the war years, Podolsk enterprises were twice awarded orders, and the Podolsky Rabochy armoured train was built at the expense of the citizens.

Another applicant for the title City of Labour Valour is Vladimir. Vladimir's enterprises supplied the front with aircraft instruments, special vehicles and motorcycles. During the Great Patriotic War, Vladimir factories produced various types of ammunition in volumes of up to 15 million units. Let me note that soldier ID tags, which today preserve the memory of our soldiers and are a welcome find for raiders, come from Vladimir. Vladimir was home of the only enterprise in the country producing these tags. Vladimir Chemical Plant products were part of almost every unit of military equipment – these were primarily insulating materials for wires.

In addition, in just a few months in 1943, a new tractor plant was built in Vladimir, which in a short period of time, produced more than 500 Universal-2 tractors.

And, of course, we should pay tribute to the people of Vladimir who built the defensive bypass of Suzdal–Nebyloye–Vladimir–Sudogda in the autumn of 1941.

The next applicant for the title of City of Labour Valour is the city of Votkinsk. During the Great Patriotic War, every ninth cannon was made in this small city in Udmurtia. It is also known as an important metallurgy centre. City workers sent more than 160,000 tonnes of steel to the front.

The town of Prokopyevsk in the Kemerovo Region contributed 31 million tonnes of coal to the country and to the front. This town gave us the names of outstanding workers, including Maria

Kosogorova. She was among the first female mine managers to be awarded the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Red Banner of Labour. During the war years, the Prokopyevsk enterprises were awarded the Red Banner by the State Defence Committee three times.

Similarly, manufacturing plants in the city of Ulan-Ude received the Red Banner from the State Defence Committee three times as well. Ulan-Ude was a centre for aircraft production. Here, 283 La-5 aircraft were built, nearly one-third of production run of this model. Ulan-Ude was also widely known for its medical products and food, especially canned meat, that was sent to the frontlines.

The city of Novomoskovsk in the Tula Region, formerly known as Stalinogorsk, was awarded two Red Banner orders by the State Defence Committee. It is still widely known as a centre of the chemical industry. In the autumn of 1941, the city's production facilities that couldn't be evacuated were blown up along with the district power plant. The residents of Novomoskovsk managed to rebuild the plants within a year. In October 1942, the first turbine generator was already running at the power plant, and the chemical plant was fully restored by late 1942.

Mikhail Kabanov, who invented the Molotov cocktail, worked in Novomoskovsk. The Molotov cocktail was first used in the battles near Tula and was feared by German tank crews.

The city of Rubtsovsk in the Altai Territory supplied the army with around 1.5 million mine shells and hundreds of thousands of entrenching tools in a matter of three years.

During the war, Ryazan produced over a million mines a month, which met about 20 percent of the front's needs. Over the course

of the Great Patriotic War, the city manufactured over 15 million sets of underclothing, uniforms and equipment and more than a million pairs of boots.

The cities of Khanty-Mansiysk and Nakhodka became fishing and fish processing centres and major suppliers of canned fish. Khanty-Mansiysk supplied almost 45 percent of all canned fish that was sent to the front.

Nakhodka was the first to organise distant fishing expeditions to the shores of Kamchatka and Sakhalin, pioneering a new fishing technique. Additionally, the residents of Nakhodka in the Primorye Territory donated significant amounts of money to support the front. In 1942, they raised over two million rubles to build an air squadron.

In closing, this year, relatively small towns are vying for the title City of Labour Valour, towns that played a significant role in the defence industry, helping to achieve victory and rebuild our country. Their example underscores the importance of every individual's input in the collective effort.

Mr President, considering the contributions of the residents of these towns and cities to the Great Victory, the Russian Academy of Sciences suggests awarding them the honorary title, City of Labour Valour.

Thank you.

**Vladimir Putin:** Thank you very much, Mr Krasnikov.

Please, Mr Shkolnik.

**Director of the Central Victory Museum Alexander Shkolnik:**

Mr President, participants of the meeting of the Russian Pobeda

(Victory) Organising Committee, good afternoon.

I welcome you from the Victory Museum exhibition dedicated to the special military operation and its heroes. We considered it important to talk about our battle with the Ukrainian Nazis right now. Although the battle is not over yet, it already has its own history, its victories and its exploits. We need to talk about them today. We cannot be silent. This truth is very necessary for people.

Today, for obvious reasons, it is impossible to reveal the history of all the episodes of the special operation: this will be future work. I want to assure you that the Victory Museum is fully prepared to properly present every hero of the special operation, as well as every feat, every significant event of this, without exaggeration, great battle.

Mr President, let me express my deep gratitude for your support for the idea of establishing the National Historical Memory Centre, a centre that we are certain will be able to consolidate the efforts of the state and society in a big cause that directly meets the goals of implementing the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation and the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Values, including, of course, historical memory.

The first proposal to establish a centre was made even before the start of the special military operation. It is important to emphasise this, because even back then the idea was important, but now, when we have the experience of the special military operation, it has acquired a very special meaning.

It is true that history has been turned into a weapon today. We are facing a new type of war, which is being waged not only

for the minds, but also for the souls of young people, our children and grandchildren. Therefore, we simply must create an effective tool to counter this kind of aggression. We need a platform and, I would even say, a response centre capable of consolidating efforts to preserve historical memory, stop attempts to falsify history, and give a worthy rebuff to the enemy.

We believe that the National Historical Memory Centre should become this response centre, which will unite the efforts and resources of everyone who consider it their duty and a matter of conscience to protect the interests of Russia and its future. The time has come.

I will briefly speak about what the centre will do. First of all, in accordance with the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, it will work on forming “ideological immunity” in Russian society. It will be based on the so-called knowledge base, which will be developed with the scientific community. Recognised standards for the perception and evaluation of the most important historical events and personalities will become the foundation for their further dissemination and implementation in state programmes that are already being successfully implemented today.

Next, all the centre’s activities must be aimed at young people as a priority. Here, it is important to achieve the broad involvement of the younger generation in the work of preserving, protecting and transferring historical memory, including via specialised educational programmes and information channels, the very creation of which can become an example of intergenerational cooperation, and, of course, through involving young people in collective creative work in the interests of preserving

the historical heritage of our country. In fact, the centre should become one of the institutions for educating children and youth.

The centre's activity will obviously focus on creating a mass and widely circulated information, educational, and cultural product. We need to convert historical figures and facts into emotions, impressions, and beliefs. We must transform historical science, dry archival data and documents into accessible knowledge material and a tool for public dialogue. In order to do this, the centre will have to form a creative, media, scientific, and expert community, which is ready to cooperate systematically. We believe it important to involve the direct participants in historically significant events, primarily the heroes of the special military operation, whose truth no one can doubt, in this work.

Next, we believe the centre will definitely be associated with designing and holding interesting and resonant events. History and historical memory must come alive, form emotional experiences, and get truly personal. We need many events like this. Their character and scale may differ a lot, but their design and semantic content must proceed from a single centre, and this is the role that we anticipate for the National Historical Memory Centre.

And, in conclusion, on the international side of the centre's activities, the historical truth, when used for good, is still a tremendous force that unites peoples of different countries and promotes friendly and partnership relations between them. We regard international cooperation as an unconditional priority of ours.

Mr President, upon your instruction to establish the National



Historical Memory Centre: the issue was comprehensively studied and discussed at the interdepartmental level together with civil society institutions. Our colleagues have no doubts about the relevance of creating a centre. Today, executive orders on the establishment of the centre, its charter, activity programme and financial and economic foundation have been drafted. We are ready to move forward quickly.

Thank you for supporting the work we began earlier. I hope that the centre will be established, registered and funded as soon as 2024.

There is only one request. If possible, please instruct the Presidential Executive Office to act as the founder of the National Historical Memory Centre under the President of the Russian Federation. By the way, everyone shares this opinion. The centre should be granted the “under the President of the Russian Federation” status because of its significance and the unconditional trust that society gives to structures associated with the head of state. This was previously discussed with my colleagues.

On behalf of everyone who took part in the activities to fulfil the instructions, I can assure you that by the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Victory, Russia will have a powerful institution that will not only preserve historical memory and effectively repel the aggression of the opponents of Russia and its people, but also enhance Russia’s international prestige. The full launch of the centre may become one of the main events of the celebrations marking the anniversary year of Victory in the Great Patriotic War. We are ready to work, with

the understanding that the country should have not only powerful defences, but also a shield of values. We believe in the unconditional victory of our Fatherland on all fronts and at all times.

Thank you.

**Vladimir Putin:** Mr Shkolnik, you have just spoken about historical memory, which is a key topic of our meeting today. As the director of a federal state institution, the Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War, you can remind us: we know the approximate number of victims for the entire Great Patriotic War, but how many civilians died and were killed by the Nazis?

**Alexander Shkolnik:** On the order of several million. I know the exact figure - for example, you talked about the contribution to the Great Victory: we had 197 million citizens before the war, in the Soviet Union, of which 34.5 million went to fight in those four years, while the rest of the citizens made up over 100 million people, and almost every one of them, from teenagers on up, made their own contribution to the Victory, however small. I think that we must carry on the memory of this part of the great feat of all our people.

**Vladimir Putin:** Still, we need to understand how many people died defending the Fatherland during the hostilities, and how many suffered and were killed by the Nazis.

**Alexander Shkolnik:** Millions and millions, Mr President.

**Vladimir Putin:** Clearly millions and millions, that much is obvious, but we need to at least have an approximate figure.

I would like to ask the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Mr Berel Lazar,

to remind us about the number of victims of the Holocaust in general.

**Chief Rabbi of Russia Berel Lazar:** What we know is definitely more than six million. It is clear that this figure, six million, is preliminary. The worst thing is the children who died. And you were right about anti-Semitism: it did not only happen back then; today we can see its resurgence in Europe, in Germany. Unfortunately, we can also see this in neighbouring countries.

This is why everything you said was right. It is necessary to fight not only those phenomena that happen, as they say, in the political world, but above all in the ideological one, because the ideology of Nazism is the most terrible ideology that can exist on Earth.

And thank you for constantly emphasising this and talking about it, reminding everyone that it cannot be tolerated; there can be no compromise, it must be fought to the end.

**Vladimir Putin:** Yes, and we must see the connection between the tragic events of years past and today.

How many Jews were killed by the Nazis in Ukraine during the war?

**Berel Lazar:** Unfortunately, I do not know the exact figures. I know one thing, unfortunately, when the Nazis came, many towns and cities were, as they say, Judenfrei, had already been made free of Jews, because collaborators and people themselves killed Jews, even before the arrival of Nazism, of the Nazis.

**Vladimir Putin:** Exactly. Mr Shkolnik, do you have these figures?

**Alexander Shkolnik:** Yes, we found the figures: 12.7 million civilians of the Soviet Union died, something like that.

**Vladimir Putin:** Yes, 12.7. And how many Jews were exterminated in Ukraine by the Nazis and collaborators, about whom the Chief Rabbi of Russia has just spoken?

**Alexander Shkolnik:** I cannot give you a precise answer, Mr President.

**Vladimir Putin:** Then I will tell you: one and a half million people. Women, old people, children. One and a half million people. If in total six million Jews were killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust, then this is a quarter, 25 percent of the victims.

Mr Shkolnik, who did this in Ukraine?

**Alexander Shkolnik:** Actually, it was done by the Ukrainians themselves, who joined the units.

**Vladimir Putin:** What kind of Ukrainians?

**Alexander Shkolnik:** Meaning?

**Vladimir Putin:** Literal. There were Ukrainians who saved other people, but who killed them?

**Alexander Shkolnik:** They were Nazis.

**Vladimir Putin:** Yes. These were not just Nazis, these were the collaborators that the Chief Rabbi of Russia has just spoken about. These were the Banderites and others like them who gave direct orders. The Germans, even the SS troops, did not consider it possible to take part in these mass killings. They practically put it all in the hands of local nationalists and anti-Semites.

This is directly related to today. And there should be nothing speculative about everything that we are doing. These are all concrete things that are connected with today, so I ask you to pay

attention to this, too, not only as a person who is taking part in our event today, but as the director of our leading institution, the Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War.

All these numbers are known and clear. The whole world knows that Bandera's followers and their associates carried out this monstrous Nazi plot. But it must be shown convincingly and vividly so that nothing like this happens again in the future. People should know who the current Ukrainian authorities have placed on the pedestal of honour and who they are glorifying. After all, we made it clear that we must do everything to prevent the glorification of Nazism. And this is exactly what is happening there. We must show who the people at the helm in Ukraine are. There may be no two opinions about them.

**Alexander Shkolnik:** Mr President, less than a month after the special operation started, on April 15, we opened an exhibition called "Ordinary Nazism" in the Museum of Victory. It focuses on what you are sharing now.

**Vladimir Putin:** Listen, Mr Shkolnik, the special operation has nothing to do with that. Everything we are talking about happened during the Great Patriotic War, when people were being annihilated. Your blood curdles when you look at the archival documents. It is impossible to see it without tears in your eyes. This must be made public for people to see. Who are the current authorities glorifying? Blood-stained murderers, that is who. Monuments are being erected to monsters. They carry banners and their portraits in central parts of big cities.

I am not sure everyone in Ukraine is aware of what we are talking about. But at least let's show it from here, okay?

Thank you. Who else would like to speak and share their thoughts? Please go ahead.

Yes, please, Mr Medinsky.

**Presidential Aide [Vladimir Medinsky](#):** Good afternoon, Mr President,

I wanted to say that the figures you mentioned are included in the unified state history textbook for upper classes which was put together by the Ministry of Education. That includes the minimum figure of 13.5 million civilians who were victims of the Nazi genocide during the war. This figure is not conclusive, apparently. But it is at least 13.5 million people, including the 1.5 million Jews killed by Nazi henchmen in Ukraine. All these figures are provided in the section on the outcomes of WWII and our allies' objective losses are provided for comparison as well.

Thank you.

**Vladimir Putin:** Yes, and all of that can be found in archival documents, including orders, reports on carrying out these orders, and names of the executioners. Everything is there. All we need to do is make it public so that there is no misunderstanding about who we are fighting, what our goals are and who our adversary is. It is not the Ukrainian people, but these monsters and their successors. We need to show this; it is all in there. Please pay attention to this.

Please, who else would like to add anything to it? Go ahead. Is that all?

Then, thank you everyone. The proposals that have been expressed and formulated today are accepted. We will work



on implementing them. Please include this in the relevant documents.

Thank you very much. All the best.