

Russia Scraps WWII Remembrance March on Security Concerns

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The "Immortal Regiment" rally in Moscow in 2022. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia on Tuesday [canceled](#) annual processions in remembrance of relatives who fought in World War II amid apparent security concerns linked to the fighting in Ukraine.

Millions of people across Russia traditionally march in the Immortal Regiment processions on May 9, the annual holiday commemorating the end of World War II, holding placards of relatives who lived and died during the conflict.

Yelena Tsunayeva, a federal lawmaker and co-chair of the Immortal Regiment of Russia organization's central headquarters, said Tuesday that the 2023 marches had been called off.

"They won't take place. At the present moment, a number of regions have already refused as a result of security threats," Tsunayeva told Russia's state-run news agency TASS.

Western Russia's Kursk and Belgorod regions, which border Ukraine and have come under regular shelling since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, announced earlier this year that they

would not hold Immortal Regiment marches.

Crimea, a southern Ukrainian peninsula that Russia annexed in 2014 and which has suffered attacks since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, also scrapped the public processions.

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“The Immortal Regiment march is one indivisible history: if people don't have this chance somewhere, let's use other options,” Tsunayeva said.

Immortal Regiment commemorations originated as a non-state initiative in the Siberian city of Tomsk in 2012.

The marches then spread across hundreds of Russian towns and cities, with political figures seeking to join forces with organizers and capitalize on their success. They are now a state sponsored event.

Moscow's Immortal March has traditionally been led by President Vladimir Putin.

Tsunayeva, the Immortal Regiment of Russia co-chair, encouraged Russians to post photos of their World War II veteran relatives on social media and other platforms, including on the organization's website, instead of taking part in marches.

“The emphasis is that portraits are with us and around us all day long,” she told TASS.

The Kremlin has in recent years promoted celebrations of Victory Day, one of Russia's most popular holidays with military parades taking center stage, to foster patriotism and rally support for the Russian Armed Forces.

This year would mark the first cancellation of in-person Immortal Regiment processions since the end of the coronavirus pandemic.

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