

Russie : insoumission

Berne, le 21 novembre 2025

Mentions légales

Editeur

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Version disponible en français et en allemand

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Ce rapport repose sur des renseignements d'expert·e·s et sur les propres recherches de l'Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés (OSAR). Conformément aux standards COI, l'OSAR fonde ses recherches sur des sources accessibles publiquement. Lorsque les informations obtenues dans le temps imparti sont insuffisantes, elle fait appel à des expert·e·s. L'OSAR documente ses sources de manière transparente et traçable, mais peut toutefois décider de les anonymiser, afin de garantir la protection de ses contacts.

1 Introduction

Le présent document a été rédigé par l'analyse-pays de l'Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés (OSAR) à la suite d'une demande qui lui a été adressée. Il se penche sur les questions suivantes :

1. Un jeune homme convoqué au service militaire dans la Fédération de Russie peut-il repousser celui-ci s'il est en formation à ce moment-là ? Peut-il repousser ce recrutement jusqu'à la fin de sa formation ?
2. Est-il possible de reporter le service militaire à une date ultérieure moyennant le versement d'une somme d'argent ? Est-ce un acte légal ou un acte illégal de corruption ?
3. Un jeune Russe qui a fui à l'étranger pour échapper au service militaire et qui a reçu plusieurs convocations auxquelles il n'a pas répondu sera-t-il emprisonné s'il retourne en Russie ? Si oui, quelle est la longueur de la peine prévue ?
4. Un conscrit court-il le risque le risque d'être mobilisé de force pendant ou après sa période de formation militaire et envoyé sur le front ukrainien ou dans les territoires occupés ?

L'analyse-pays de l'OSAR observe les développements dans la Fédération de Russie depuis plusieurs années¹. Sur la base de ses propres recherches ainsi que de renseignements transmis par des expert·e·s externes, elle apporte les réponses suivantes aux questions ci-dessus.

2 Report du service militaire pour formation

L'inscription dans un établissement d'enseignement permet en principe d'obtenir un report du service militaire jusqu'à la fin des études. Durcissement des règles de vérification. Selon le *Service danois d'immigration* et l'*Agence suédoise pour les migrations (DIS/Migrationsverket)*, les études académiques représentent l'une des raisons principales, sinon la raison principale, justifiant un report du service militaire. D'après l'expert sur la Russie, Claus Mathiesen, consulté par *DIS/Migrationsverket*, le simple fait d'être inscrit dans un établissement d'enseignement permettrait plus ou moins automatiquement d'obtenir un report du service militaire jusqu'à la fin ou l'abandon des études. Toutefois, la réglementation s'est resserrée et l'ensemble des documents attestant d'un motif de report lié aux études sera vraisemblablement vérifié de manière approfondie au bureau de recrutement militaire. Un individu qui aurait reçu un report de conscription pour suivre des études dans une matière spécifique ne pourrait plus prétendre à ce report s'il décidait de changer de filière (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025).

¹ www.osar.ch/publications/rapports-sur-les-pays-dorigine

Au Daghestan, les raids policiers épargnent les étudiants universitaires mais emmènent les diplômés d'établissements techniques au bureau de recrutement pour tri. Selon le site d'information *Caucasian Knot*, au Daghestan, lors de raids conduits par la police auprès de jeunes en âge d'être appelés sous les drapeaux, les étudiants détenant une carte d'étudiant universitaire sont épargnés, mais les personnes ayant obtenu leur diplôme d'établissements techniques sont tout de même emmenées au bureau de recrutement militaire. Après leur transfert au bureau d'enregistrement et de recrutement militaire, un processus de sélection est effectué : les personnes destinées à être conscrites et celles accusées d'insoumission sont maintenues sur place, tandis que celles justifiant de reports repartent à leur domicile (*Caucasian Knot*, 12 juin 2025).

Les personnes ayant fréquenté un établissement technique avant l'université sont considérées comme ayant déjà utilisé leur droit au report et peuvent être appelés durant leurs études universitaires, contrairement à celles s'inscrivant directement à l'université. Selon *Caucasian Knot*, les personnes qui ont terminé la neuvième année d'école et sont ensuite entrées dans un établissement d'enseignement spécialisé puis à l'université, sont considérées comme ayant déjà utilisé leur droit constitutionnel à un report pendant leurs études, et font donc l'objet d'une convocation au service militaire. Il est important de distinguer deux situations : lorsqu'une personne s'inscrit à l'université immédiatement après la fin de sa scolarité, elle obtient un report couvrant l'ensemble de son cursus universitaire. Cependant, si elle a d'abord suivi une formation dans un établissement technique post-scolaire avant d'accéder à l'université, elle est considérée comme ayant utilisé son report pendant cette première formation, ce qui la rend susceptible d'être appelée même durant ses études universitaires. Cette règle vaut également pour ceux qui atteignent l'âge de conscription sans avoir été auparavant appelés : ils peuvent recevoir une convocation une fois leurs études terminées, pour autant que les critères de conscription soient satisfaits (*Caucasian Knot*, 12 juin 2025).

Les autorités russes peuvent violer les droits des conscrits en ignorant les reports légaux pour études ou raisons médicales et en les détenant dans les bureaux de recrutement. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, les autorités russes ont renforcé leurs mécanismes de recrutement militaire, en partie en violant certains droits des citoyens, rendant ainsi plus malaisé l'usage des voies légales pour éviter le service militaire obligatoire. Les autorités russes auraient isolé et détenu des conscrits dans les bureaux de recrutement militaire, ont passé outre les reports pour études et n'ont pas pris en considération les demandes de service civil alternatif. Il est également rapporté que le personnel médical des Voenkومات (bureau de recrutement militaire local) écarte les diagnostics médicaux de personnes inaptes au service, ce qui aboutit à leur incorporation militaire en dépit de raisons légales justifiant un report (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025). Le *Caucasian Knot* cite un journaliste qui relève que, concernant les méthodes utilisées pour passer outre les reports dont bénéficient les étudiants, dans un certain nombre de situations, les autorités recourent à une « tactique particulièrement malhonnête » (*Caucasian Knot*, 12 juin 2025). La *Platform RAAM*, un projet médiatique néerlandais à but non lucratif, indique également que dans de nombreux cas, les diagnostics médicaux qui devraient disqualifier les recrues sont simplement ignorés par les commissions de conscription locales (*Platform RAAM*, 21 mai 2025).

3 Report du service militaire moyennant paiement

Le durcissement de la surveillance et du recrutement militaire en Russie a considérablement réduit les possibilités d'éviter la conscription par la corruption. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, du fait de l'omniprésence de la corruption en Russie, un individu pourrait payer une université de faible niveau académique pour s'y faire inscrire, même sans avoir aucune intention de suivre effectivement les cours. Cependant, comme le souligne l'expert Sergey Krivenko, consulté par *DIS/Migrationsverket*, l'État russe a renforcé sa surveillance en matière de corruption, ce qui a considérablement réduit les possibilités de se soustraire à la conscription moyennant des versements illicites.

Les prix des exemptions militaires falsifiées ont explosé après la mobilisation, tandis que des cabinets privés facturent des milliers de dollars pour une assistance souvent inefficace. Selon *Platform RAAM*, avant l'invasion de l'Ukraine, obtenir un document d'exemption militaire falsifié (un « billet blanc ») coûtait entre 90 000 et 450 000 roubles (environ de 918 à 4592 francs suisses²). Après l'annonce de la mobilisation, les tarifs ont explosé : début 2023, des certificats d'exemption falsifiés avec diagnostic justifiant un report se vendaient sur le dark web pour plus d'un million de roubles (environ 10 200 francs suisses). Des montages plus sophistiqués, incluant de faux dossiers médicaux ou des diagnostics simulés de maladies chroniques, pouvaient atteindre 7 millions de roubles (environ 71 433 francs suisses). Selon *Meduza*, cité par *Platform RAAM*, une industrie florissante de cabinets privés promet désormais d'accompagner les conscrits dans le processus de recrutement, facturant souvent des tarifs exorbitants – entre 150 000 et 200 000 roubles (entre 1 530 et 2 040 francs suisses) – pour un « soutien » qui aboutit rarement à des résultats concrets. Ces entreprises affirment pouvoir aider leurs clients à éviter la conscription par des moyens légaux. Certains de ces cabinets privés sont dirigés par d'anciens membres de commissions de conscription ou entretiennent des liens personnels avec des responsables militaires et des médecins. En Bouriatie, la militante Nadezhda Nizovkina explique que le marché noir s'est entremêlé avec les forces de l'ordre : certains médecins collaborent désormais avec les autorités pour dénoncer les candidats à l'insoumission, transformant ce qui était autrefois un système de corruption en piège (*Platform RAAM*, 21 mai 2025).

4 Sanctions encourues en cas d'insoumission

4.1 Cadre légal

L'insoumission (ou refus du service militaire) peut être punie d'amendes (jusqu'à 277 euros pour absence à une convocation, 2 040 francs suisses pour évasion illégale) et peut entraîner jusqu'à deux ans d'emprisonnement en période de mobilisation. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, qui se réfère à l'article 21.5 du Code des infractions administratives, l'absence injustifiée d'un citoyen à la date et au lieu précisés dans la convocation du bureau de recrutement militaire représente une infraction punie d'une amende allant de 10 000 à 30 000 roubles (soit de 102 à 306 francs suisses). Ce même texte législatif stipule que les

² Selon le taux de change du 25 novembre 2025.

personnes en âge de conscription doivent notifier leur adresse de résidence à leur bureau de recrutement local. Ne pas le faire entraîne également une sanction pécuniaire. L'insoumission à la conscription fait également l'objet d'une réglementation au titre de l'article 328 du Code pénal, lequel prévoit que le fait de se soustraire illégalement à la conscription peut être sanctionné par une amende maximale de 200 000 roubles (soit 2 040 francs suisses), par la confiscation du salaire ou d'autres revenus du condamné durant une période maximale de 18 mois, par des travaux forcés d'une durée maximale de deux ans, par une arrestation pouvant aller jusqu'à six mois ou par une peine d'emprisonnement ne dépassant pas deux ans (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025). Le *Ministère néerlandais des affaires étrangères (Minbuza)* confirme que le fait de se soustraire aux obligations du service militaire constitue une infraction susceptible d'être sanctionnée. Dans le contexte d'une mobilisation militaire, cette sanction peut se traduire par une peine privative de liberté sous forme de détention dont la durée peut atteindre deux ans (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025).

Depuis avril 2023, les insoumis qui ne se présentent pas dans les vingt jours suivant leur convocation subissent automatiquement des restrictions (suspension du permis de conduire, gel des transactions immobilières, interdiction de crédit bancaire et de voyager). Selon *Minbuza*, au-delà des mesures visant à compliquer l'évasion du service militaire et de la menace de sanctions pénales, des dispositions supplémentaires ont été adoptées en avril 2023 dans le but de dissuader l'insoumission au service militaire. Dans le cas où une personne ne se présenterait pas au centre de recrutement militaire dans un délai de vingt jours après avoir reçu sa convocation, une série de mesures restrictives sera automatiquement mise en application : la personne perdra son droit de conduire un véhicule automobile, ne pourra plus bénéficier de prestations sociales, se verra interdire toute transaction concernant des biens immobiliers, ne pourra pas procéder à l'enregistrement d'une société auprès de la Chambre de commerce et n'aura plus accès au crédit bancaire. À compter du 1er octobre 2023, le montant des amendes a été porté à un maximum de 30 000 roubles (ou 306 francs suisses). L'ensemble de ces mesures restrictives, incluant l'interdiction de voyager, peuvent être annulées dès lors que la personne concernée s'est effectivement présentée à un bureau de recrutement militaire (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025).

Des poursuites pénales pour insoumission ne peuvent être engagées que si l'intention d'évasion est démontrée, notamment par des défauts de comparution répétés sans motif valable et après notification régulière des convocations. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, l'engagement de la responsabilité pénale dans un cas d'évasion de conscription requiert que la tentative de se dérober au service militaire soit volontaire. L'existence de cette volonté délibérée doit être démontrée au tribunal, ce qui peut notamment s'effectuer en présentant des preuves de défauts de comparution répétés au bureau de recrutement militaire en l'absence de justifications valides. Lorsque des poursuites pénales sont engagées pour insoumission à la conscription, le tribunal doit par ailleurs établir que l'intéressé a effectivement été informé de manière régulière de son obligation de se présenter au centre de recrutement militaire. Le délai habituel accordé entre la réception d'une convocation et la date de comparution requise au Voenskomat s'élève approximativement à 20 jours. Sans motif légitime justifiant le non-respect de la convocation, l'individu concerné est susceptible d'être qualifié d'insoumis (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025). Selon *Minbuza*, qui se réfère à des informations de l'Agence de l'Union européenne pour l'asile (EUA), des poursuites pénales pour insoumission au service militaire pourraient être initiées dans le cas où un conscrit aurait fait fi des convocations lors d'au moins deux campagnes de recrutement sans formuler d'objection

aux convocations et à condition que ces convocations aient été délivrées dans le respect des dispositions légales (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025).

4.2 Mise en œuvre

En pratique, les cas d'insoumission poursuivis pénalement ou non aboutissent généralement à une amende plutôt qu'à l'emprisonnement. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, dans le cas où une personne refuserait de respecter la procédure militaire et de se présenter au bureau de recrutement militaire, il est très peu probable que la situation dégénère en affaire pénale, cette éventualité ne survenant qu'à la suite de refus de comparution réitérés. Dans la majorité des cas, les personnes qui se soustraient à la conscription reçoivent des amendes administratives après avoir ignoré leur deuxième ou troisième convocation. Selon les explications de Huseyn Aliyev, chercheur et expert de la Russie, consulté par *DIS/Migrationsverket*, lorsqu'un cas d'évasion de conscription fait l'objet d'une investigation pénale, le dossier est confié à un enquêteur de police qui dispose du pouvoir discrétionnaire de décider du niveau de sévérité de la punition. Dans les cas exceptionnels d'insoumission qui aboutissent réellement à une procédure judiciaire, l'issue la plus probable demeure l'imposition d'une amende à l'individu concerné, cette amende étant toutefois susceptible d'être substantiellement plus importante que celle appliquée dans les procédures administratives – atteignant vraisemblablement le double du montant de l'amende administrative. Huseyn Aliyev affirme n'avoir observé aucun élément probant démontrant qu'une personne ait réellement été incarcérée pour insoumission à la conscription. Deux autres sources expriment des observations similaires (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025). Selon *Minbuza*, qui se réfère à une information fournie par un juriste, dans la majorité des cas pénaux, les sanctions prononcées ont consisté uniquement en des amendes, sans recours à la détention (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025).

En 2023 et 2024, la quasi-totalité des affaires pénales d'insoumission se sont soldées par des amendes. Aucune peine de prison. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, durant la dernière décennie, le nombre annuel d'affaires pénales ouvertes pour insoumission à la conscription en application de l'article 328 s'est élevé à plusieurs centaines, représentant moins de 0,2 pour cent de l'ensemble des cas de conscription. La quasi-totalité de ces affaires s'est soldée par l'imposition d'amendes. Pour l'année 2023, on dénombre 901 affaires, parmi lesquelles 894 ont donné lieu à des amendes. Trois dossiers ont abouti à des condamnations assorties du sursis, et trois individus ont bénéficié d'un acquittement. Les dossiers restants ont été classés sans suite pour des motifs non précisés. Parallèlement, plusieurs milliers de sanctions administratives sous forme d'amendes ont été appliquées pour défaut de comparution aux convocations. Dans ces situations, les faits ne relevaient pas de l'évasion de conscription au sens pénal, mais étaient plutôt caractérisés comme des manquements aux obligations associées à la procédure de recrutement (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025). Selon *Minbuza*, qui se réfère à des données compilées par Verstka, média d'opposition, 958 individus ont été reconnus coupables d'insoumission à la conscription en application de l'article 328(1) du Code pénal durant l'année 2023 (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025). Pour le premier semestre 2024, *Minbuza* et *DIS/Migrationsverket* s'accordent à dire que 427 condamnations ont été prononcées dans des affaires d'insoumission et aucune peine d'incarcération n'a été prononcée, les sanctions se limitant exclusivement à des amendes (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025 ; *Minbuza*, 14 février 2025).

Les autorités russes privilégient le remplissage des quotas de conscription plutôt que les poursuites systématiques contre les insoumis. Capacité limitée des tribunaux militaires à poursuivre pénalement les cas d'insoumission à la conscription ou de désertion. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, qui se base sur des informations fournies par deux sources distinctes, les autorités russes n'ont pas pour priorité de mener des recherches systématiques visant à localiser chaque individu qui s'est dérobé à ses obligations de service militaire, ni de lancer des poursuites judiciaires contre l'ensemble de ces personnes, car leur stratégie privilégiée consiste plutôt à orienter leurs ressources et leurs efforts vers l'objectif principal qui est de remplir les quotas de recrutement fixés pour chaque période de conscription. Dans le cas où une personne se soustrait à une convocation et que le bureau de recrutement militaire procède au recrutement d'un autre individu afin de satisfaire son quota, les conséquences pour la personne originellement convoquée dépendront du fait que le Voenkomat ait ou non complété l'ensemble des formalités administratives requises et transféré le dossier à un comité d'investigation. Selon l'opinion de Sergey Krivenko, cette démarche administrative complète est rarement effectuée (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025). Pour *Minbuza*, les autorités gouvernementales privilégient ainsi la prévention de l'insoumission au service militaire et de la désertion plutôt que l'engagement de poursuites judiciaires. D'après une source consultée, cette orientation s'explique notamment par l'insuffisance des capacités des juridictions militaires à traiter pénalement les cas de refus d'accomplir le service national obligatoire ou les affaires de désertion (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025).

4.3 Risques pour une personne qui est partie à l'étranger

Le paiement d'une amende n'exempte pas des futures conscriptions, et les insoumis risquent une nouvelle convocation immédiate lors d'un retour en Russie, avec risque de détention. Pour *DIS/Migrationsverket*, le fait d'avoir payé une amende pour insoumission à la conscription n'exonère pas une personne de futures campagnes de recrutement. Un individu s'étant soustrait à une conscription demeure susceptible d'être convoqué à nouveau lors des conscriptions ultérieures, dans la mesure où il se trouve toujours dans la catégorie d'âge concernée. Néanmoins, chaque campagne de conscription est instituée par décret présidentiel. En conséquence, un conscrit ayant échappé à la conscription d'automne et qui serait intercepté après que le quota de cette campagne ait été complété ne recevrait pas automatiquement de convocation pour la campagne suivante. Huseyn Aliyev rapporte l'existence de situations où des personnes ayant été sanctionnées financièrement ont reçu une nouvelle convocation dès le jour suivant. Par ailleurs, les convocations peuvent également être délivrées aux points d'entrée sur le territoire russe, notamment dans les aéroports internationaux. Le bureau de recrutement militaire mène des recherches pour localiser les évadés en coopération avec les forces de police locales. Dès lors qu'un individu a apposé sa signature sur la convocation, le Voenkomat dispose du pouvoir légal de placer cette personne en détention (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025).

Les insoumis ne sont généralement pas condamnés par contumace mais placés sur une liste de personnes recherchées, l'inculpation n'intervenant qu'à leur retour en Russie où ils risquent l'interpellation aux frontières. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, les diverses sources consultées ont déclaré n'avoir jamais eu connaissance de cas d'insoumis ayant fait l'objet de condamnations par contumace. L'approche habituelle consisterait plutôt à placer l'insoumis sur une liste de personnes recherchées et à suspendre la procédure pénale jusqu'à ce que l'intéressé soit à nouveau localisé. Huseyn Aliyev observe qu'il existe en Russie une pratique consistant à ne procéder à l'inculpation d'un individu que lorsque les autorités ont

effectivement appréhendé la personne concernée ou disposent d'un accès physique à celle-ci. Dans le cas d'une personne ayant quitté le territoire russe dans le but d'échapper à la conscription, l'inculpation n'interviendra vraisemblablement qu'au moment de son retour en Russie. Les agents en poste aux points frontaliers auront à leur disposition l'ensemble des informations et des données nécessaires pour procéder à l'interpellation de la personne. Selon Sergey Krivenko, cité par *DIS/Migrationsverket*, il n'existe aucun système public accessible qui permettrait aux personnes résidant en dehors de la Russie de vérifier si leur affaire a fait l'objet d'un renvoi vers une investigation pénale (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025).

Bien qu'il soit possible de se cacher en Russie ou de quitter le pays pour éviter la conscription, les récentes modifications législatives ont considérablement réduit ces options en renforçant les moyens des autorités pour localiser les insoumis. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, qui cite Freedom House, la Russie étant un pays de vaste étendue, une personne désireuse d'échapper à la conscription et de se dissimuler pourrait le faire sur le territoire national. L'existence serait certes plutôt difficile et contrainte, mais demeurerait néanmoins envisageable. De la même manière, il est possible de quitter le territoire russe pour se soustraire à la conscription. Toutefois, les options permettant de quitter le territoire national ou de se dissimuler dans le but d'échapper à la conscription se sont réduites suite à des modifications législatives qui établissent des contraintes pour les personnes soumises à la conscription et dotent les autorités de moyens plus performants pour localiser les évadés de conscription (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025).

5 Risques de mobilisation forcée et d'envoi au front pour les conscrits

5.1 De la conscription au front : pressions et violations contre les conscrits russes

Malgré l'interdiction légale d'envoyer des conscrits au combat, ils peuvent être affectés à des missions de logistiques ou de construction. Les conscrits ne serviraient pas dans les territoires occupés en Ukraine, mais pourraient être envoyés en Crimée. Selon *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (RFE/RL), la législation russe interdit aux conscrits – des hommes généralement âgés d'environ 18 ans qui effectuent une année de service militaire obligatoire – de servir dans des zones de combat. Néanmoins, ils peuvent être affectés à des missions à l'arrière telles que des travaux logistiques ou de construction, loin des zones de combat actives (RFE/RL, 20 mai 2025). *DIS/Migrationsverket* indique également que les conscrits contribuent à l'effort de guerre en Ukraine à travers des missions logistiques, notamment en tant que chauffeurs, mécaniciens ou personnel de livraison, entre autres. Par ailleurs, ils ont assuré la surveillance de points de contrôle, ont occupé des postes d'observation avancés. Depuis l'automne 2022, les conscrits sont activement utilisés pour surveiller la frontière russo-ukrainienne. Selon la législation russe, les conscrits ne peuvent être affectés qu'à l'intérieur du territoire russe, et la plupart des sources s'accordent sur le fait qu'ils ne servent pas en Ukraine même (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025). *Minbuza* confirme que pendant la période prise en compte dans son rapport, à savoir entre mars 2023 et janvier 2025, la Russie n'a pas envoyé de conscrits dans les territoires temporairement occupés en Ukraine. Une source de *Minbuza* indique, toutefois, que des conscrits ont été déployés en Crimée, annexée

illégalement (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025). Citant Ivan Chuvilyaev, le représentant d'une ONG russe qui soutient les personnes qui souhaitent éviter le service militaire, *Euronews* avance également que des conscrits peuvent se retrouver en Crimée (*Euronews*, 1^{er} octobre 2024).

Malgré les promesses de Poutine, de nombreux conscrits russes continuent d'être forcés à signer des contrats militaires, parfois de manière frauduleuse, et envoyés combattre. Même sans contrats, des conscrits sont envoyés dans des régions de combats actifs proches de l'Ukraine. Selon RFE/RL, en mars 2022, quelques semaines à peine après avoir lancé l'invasion à grande échelle de l'Ukraine, le président russe Vladimir Poutine avait promis que seul du personnel militaire professionnel serait déployé en Ukraine. Toutefois, de nombreux témoignages indiquent que de jeunes conscrits ont été forcés de signer des contrats militaires quasi immédiatement après leur enrôlement et envoyés en première ligne en Ukraine. Les conscrits peuvent être persuadés – ou contraints – de signer des contrats d'engagement volontaire pour le combat après seulement quatre mois d'entraînement de base et en 2025, selon des militants et des membres de familles, les conscrits russes continuent d'être acheminés dans des régions proches du front, comme à Koursk (RFE/RL, 19 mars 2025 ; RFE/RL, 20 mai 2025). Ivan Chuvilyaev, le représentant de l'ONG russe interrogé par *Euronews*, a confirmé que des conscrits sont mis sous pression pour signer des contrats militaires et que même sans contrats, des conscrits peuvent se retrouver dans des régions à la frontière de l'Ukraine, comme Belgorod ou Koursk (*Euronews*, 1^{er} octobre 2024). Selon RFE/RL, à la suite à une réforme législative russe adoptée en 2023, les conscrits peuvent désormais être contraints de signer des contrats militaires dès leur premier jour de service (RFE/RL, 3 août 2025). Selon *Minbuza*, dès avant le déclenchement de l'invasion de l'Ukraine par la Russie, la transformation de conscrits en soldats sous contrat constituait déjà une pratique établie. Depuis 2024, les médias indépendants et les ONG ont constaté une intensification de la pression exercée sur les conscrits pour les amener à signer des contrats militaires. L'institution militaire russe perpétue une tradition de violence hiérarchique connue sous le nom de « dedovchtchina ». *Minbuza* cite le média indépendant Verstka, qui en mars 2024 a fait état du fait que les conscrits pouvaient être amenés à signer des contrats militaires par divers moyens : la persuasion, l'attrait d'une rémunération avantageuse, une confusion ou désinformation sur la durée de l'engagement, et en cas de résistance, par le recours à des violences verbales et physiques (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025). Selon, *DIS/Migrationsverket*, dans certains cas, des conscrits ont bénéficié du versement ponctuel normalement attribué à un soldat au moment de la signature d'un contrat militaire, alors même qu'ils n'avaient pas encore signé un tel contrat. Dans ces circonstances, la pression sur le conscrit pour qu'il accepte l'engagement devient considérable, et de facto, l'absence de restitution active de la somme reçue pourrait être interprétée comme une acceptation tacite du service sous contrat (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025).

Les unités militaires, notamment celles stationnées près de l'Ukraine, utilisent la coercition et des incitations financières pour forcer les conscrits à signer des contrats afin d'atteindre leurs quotas mensuels. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, les unités militaires reçoivent pour consigne d'atteindre un certain quota de nouvelles signatures chaque mois, et elles trouvent divers moyens d'y parvenir. Les unités stationnées dans les régions frontalières avec l'Ukraine subissent les pressions les plus fortes pour inciter leurs soldats à signer des contrats, car les gouverneurs locaux et les responsables militaires sont eux-mêmes soumis à une forte pression du Kremlin pour recruter davantage de personnels dans les forces armées. Ces autorités s'appuient largement sur des méthodes coercitives pour attirer les conscrits et augmentent les incitations financières afin d'y parvenir. Certains appelés sont même contraints

de signer un contrat (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025). Selon le rapport du Secrétaire général de l'ONU, présenté devant le *Conseil des droits de l'homme*, comme cela a été rapporté en 2024, des conscrits seraient contraints, par la torture et la tromperie, de signer des contrats militaires qui permettraient leur envoi sur les lignes de front (HRC, 15 septembre 2025). Selon *Minbuza*, à la mi-août 2024, des mères de conscrits russes évacués de la ligne de front dans la région de Koursk ont déclaré que leurs fils avaient été contraints, sous la menace de poursuites pénales, de signer des contrats et de retourner au front. Selon elles, dans l'une des unités militaires de la région de Koursk, environ 150 conscrits auraient subi des pressions pour signer un contrat (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025).

Les conscrits qui refusent de signer un contrat subissent des pressions psychologiques et physiques pouvant durer plusieurs mois. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, il est possible pour un conscrit de refuser de signer un contrat, mais une telle décision peut lui attirer des ennuis avec les officiers, qui peuvent alors lui rendre la vie très difficile. De plus, ses camarades ne le considèrent plus comme un « vrai homme ». Ce type de pression venant du groupe peut être psychologiquement éprouvant pour de nombreux soldats. Les autorités privilégient toutefois une approche plus coercitive pour pousser les conscrits à signer avec le ministère de la Défense, en recourant à des menaces de sanctions physiques. Par exemple, certains risquent d'être enfermés dans une cave jusqu'à ce qu'ils acceptent de signer. Selon Huseyn Aliyev, plusieurs rapports indiquent que des centaines de conscrits auraient été détenus pendant des mois dans des installations situées dans les régions de Donetsk et de Louhansk. Il existe également une culture de la honte et du blâme : refuser de signer devant ses camarades peut être perçu comme déshonorant. Dans certaines bases, les conscrits qui refusent sont publiquement stigmatisés — leurs photos étant affichées sur des panneaux pour les désigner comme lâches (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025).

En décembre 2024, le conscrit Artyom Antonov, 19 ans, a été abattu d'une balle dans la tête dans une base militaire après avoir refusé de signer un contrat d'engagement. Selon *Minbuza*, début décembre 2024, des médias russes indépendants ont fait état du cas d'un jeune conscrit de 19 ans originaire du Tatarstan, Artyom Antonov. Celui-ci aurait refusé de signer un engagement contractuel pour combattre dans la région de Koursk alors qu'il effectuait son service militaire obligatoire à la frontière chinoise. Selon ces sources, le jeune homme aurait subi des sévices de la part de ses supérieurs hiérarchiques, notamment des coups portés avec une barre métallique, dans le but de le contraindre à signer. Il aurait finalement trouvé la mort (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025). RFE/RL rapporte également que Artyom Antonov a été abattu d'une balle dans la tête dans une base militaire après avoir refusé de signer un contrat d'engagement (RFE/RL, 3 août 2025).

Difficultés à contester les contrats. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, si une personne a déjà signé un contrat, le seul moyen d'éviter de l'honorer est de porter l'affaire devant les tribunaux. Les chances d'obtenir la résiliation du contrat sont d'environ 50/50, et les organisations de défense des droits humains tentent d'aider les conscrits dans ces situations (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025).

5.2 Déploiement des conscrits

Dans la région de Koursk, les conscrits peuvent légalement combattre car l'incursion ukrainienne a été qualifiée d'opération antiterroriste. Cela a causé de lourdes pertes

parmi eux. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, la situation des conscrits dans la région de Koursk présente des particularités par rapport aux conscrits russes déployés dans d'autres secteurs. Avant l'incursion ukrainienne à Koursk, la majorité des forces russes stationnées à la frontière avec l'Ukraine était constituée de conscrits. Lorsque l'offensive a débuté, ce sont donc eux qui ont essuyé les pertes les plus importantes. Selon le chercheur Huseyn Aliyev, plus d'un millier de conscrits auraient perdu la vie et nombreux auraient été faits prisonniers depuis le début de l'incursion à Koursk. Conformément à la législation russe, les conscrits ne peuvent être déployés au combat que dans le cadre d'opérations de maintien de la paix ou d'opérations antiterroristes. Toutefois, la présence ukrainienne à Koursk a été qualifiée d'incursion terroriste par les autorités russes, ce qui signifie que les conscrits peuvent effectivement être légalement déployés pour combattre à Koursk. Par conséquent, refuser de se battre à Koursk constitue également une infraction pénale (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025). RFE/RL rapporte également que lors de la contre-offensive ukrainienne dans la région de Koursk en août 2024, des conscrits, dont beaucoup âgés de 18 à 20 ans, ont subi de lourdes pertes. Des journalistes ont recensé plus d'une centaine de conscrits tués, capturés ou portés disparus (RFE/RL, 3 août 2025). Selon le média russe *Meduza*, qui cite des journalistes de *Vertska Media* qui ont analysé des articles de presse et des avis de décès publiés sur les réseaux sociaux, au moins 25 conscrits russes ont trouvé la mort dans la région de Koursk lors de l'incursion ukrainienne (*Meduza*, 20 février 2025).

Les sources divergent sur le déploiement de conscrits russes dans les régions ukrainiennes annexées, où ils seraient exposés aux attaques même s'ils n'effectuent que des tâches de soutien. Selon *DIS/Migrationsverket*, la Russie considère les régions ukrainiennes annexées de Louhansk, Donetsk, Kherson et Zaporijjia comme faisant partie du territoire russe. La question de savoir si des conscrits sont déployés dans ces régions fait l'objet de débats parmi les sources interrogées. Certaines sources estiment que les conscrits ne sont pas envoyés dans les régions annexées. D'autres sources pensent au contraire que des conscrits y sont effectivement déployés. Selon les sources qui estiment que des conscrits sont déployés en Ukraine, ces derniers accompliraient des tâches de soutien à l'effort de guerre russe, telles que la construction de fortifications défensives ou le creusement de tranchées. Bien qu'ils ne soient pas engagés dans des combats actifs, les conscrits servant à proximité des lignes de front resteraient néanmoins exposés aux attaques de drones ou de missiles ukrainiens. D'après Huseyn Aliyev, se retrouver dans l'une des régions annexées placerait un conscrit dans une situation désespérée, car il y courrait un risque bien plus élevé de subir des blessures potentiellement mortelles que dans n'importe quelle autre partie de la Russie. Huseyn Aliyev ajoute qu'il y a eu des cas où des casernes militaires abritant des conscrits ont été frappées par des missiles ukrainiens à longue portée à Louhansk et Donetsk, mais que les conscrits servant à Kherson et Zaporijjia seraient moins susceptibles d'être touchés (*DIS/Migrationsverket*, mars 2025). Selon Ivan Chuvilyaev, représentant de l'ONG *Get lost*, une ONG qui soutient les personnes cherchant à échapper à la conscription, interrogé par *Euronews*, même sans contrat, les conscrits peuvent être envoyés en Crimée, annexée illégalement, ou dans les régions russes de Belgorod, Koursk et Briansk, qui, selon lui, ne sont pas plus sûres que les territoires temporairement occupés dans les régions ukrainiennes de Louhansk, Donetsk, Kherson et Zaporijjia (*Euronews*, 1^{er} octobre 2024). *Minbuza* cite également des sources selon lesquelles des conscrits auraient été déployés en Crimée illégalement annexée (*Minbuza*, 14 février 2025).

6 Sources

BBC, 1er avril 2025:

« President Vladimir Putin has called up 160,000 men aged 18-30, Russia's highest number of conscripts since 2011, as the country moves to expand the size of its military.

The spring call-up for a year's military service came several months after Putin said Russia should increase the overall size of its military to almost 2.39 million and its number of active servicemen to 1.5 million.

That is a rise of 180,000 over the coming three years.

Vice Adm Vladimir Tsimlyansky said the new conscripts would not be sent to fight in Ukraine for what Russia calls its "special military operation".

However, there have been reports of conscripts being killed in fighting in Russia's border regions and they were sent to fight in Ukraine in the early months of the full-scale war.

The current draft, which takes place between April and July, comes despite US attempts to forge a ceasefire in the war.

There was no let-up in the violence on Tuesday, with Ukraine saying that a Russian attack on a power facility in the southern city of Kherson had left 45,000 people without electricity.

Although Russia has turned down a full US-brokered ceasefire with Ukraine, it says it did agree to stop attacking Ukraine's energy facilities. In an apparent attempt to deny Moscow had broken the terms of that deal, Russian officials said they had told Putin that Ukrainian drones had carried out attacks with little sign of a break.

Russia calls up conscripts in the spring and autumn but the latest draft of 160,000 young men is 10,000 higher than the same period in 2024.

Since the start of last year, the pool of young men available for the draft has been increased by raising the maximum age from 27 to 30.

As well as call-up notices delivered by post, Russia's young men will be receiving notifications on the state services website Gosuslugi.

In Moscow there were reports that call-ups had already been sent out on 1 April via the mos.ru city website.

Increasing numbers of Russians are trying to avoid the army by taking on "alternative civilian service". But human rights lawyer Timofey Vaskin warned on independent Russian media that every new call-up since the start of the war had become a lottery: "Authorities are coming up with new forms of refilling the army."

Quite apart from its twice-yearly draft, Russia has also called up large numbers of men as contract soldiers and recruited thousands of soldiers from North Korea.

*Moscow has had to respond to extensive losses in Ukraine, with more than 100,000 verified by the BBC and Mediazona as soldiers killed in Ukraine.
The true number could be more than double.*

Invisible losses fighting for Russia in Ukraine. [...] » Source: BBC, Putin begins biggest Russian military call-up in years, 1er avril 2025: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c36718p52eyo>

Caucasian knot, 12 juin 2025:

*« **The current situation with the conscription in Dagestan is not entirely clear, and people lack information.** There were no so many complaints about the law enforcers' actions even against the backdrop of mobilization. But in each case, it is necessary to figure out whether there are actually violations of rights, abuse of power, and then, if necessary, these actions are to be challenged, note interviewed journalists from Dagestan.*

Journalist Milrad Fatullaev claims he cannot confirm reports that law enforcers carry out mass raids.

"That people are being searched for, forcibly detained, and forced into some cars ... We have not noted such information," journalist Milrad Fatullaev told the "Caucasian Knot".

According to the journalist's information, the conscription is being carried out in a regular way. "There is a conscription plan, and it has always existed: autumn, spring conscription. The number of conscripts has always been practically unchanged. Our military registration and enlistment offices were to fulfil the conscription plan. Another matter is that, say, some number of conscripts could decrease, because those who wanted to serve in the army could easily volunteer under a military contract. If they want to receive remuneration, even if they end up on the front line, then there is no sense for them to join the army as ordinary conscripts. The above could lead to the fact that some number of conscripts decreased, and, therefore, it became somewhat more difficult for military registration and enlistment offices to fulfil the set-up conscription plans," Milrad Fatullaev noted.

*At a briefing dedicated to the spring conscription campaign of 2025, Colonel Abdurakhman Muradkhanov, the military commissar of the Republic of Dagestan, has announced that the spring conscription for military service of citizens born in 1995-2007 is being carried out as planned in the period from April 1 to July 15. "An exception will be made for teaching staff of educational institutions who will be conscripted for the military service in the period from May 1 to July 15. **The target set for the republic in April-July 2025 is to call up more than 3700 people for the military service,**" the RIA "Dagestan" regional news agency quotes the military commissar of the Republic of Dagestan as stating.*

Earlier, 3400 citizens were called up from the Republic of Dagestan as part of the autumn conscription campaign.

At the same time, journalist Milrad Fatullaev has not ruled out some actions to search for draft dodgers.

"As for individual cases when conscripts are being sought somewhere, this may be due to a situation of violation of the procedure for registering citizens for military service. That is, we are talking about those who are already evading conscription and are wanted. Another matter is that special attention is now being paid to the evasion of military service in connection with the special military operation (SMO)," Milrad Fatullaev explained. [...]

Meanwhile, another Dagestani journalist, who preferred to remain anonymous, has reported that law enforcers' raids on conscripts are regular and have been carried out in Makhachkala regularly over the past 15-20 years.

*"As confirmation of the above, we can take the statements of the conscripts themselves, their parents, as well as numerous photos and videos of those events. **As a rule, all young people of conscription age become victims of such law enforcers' raids. After being delivered to a military registration and enlistment office, the young people are being sorted: conscripts and draft dodgers remain, and those with deferments go home. It is important here that students with university student cards may not be affected by a law enforcers' raid, but technical school graduates would still be brought to a military registration and enlistment office,**" the Dagestani journalist noted.*

*He believes that the local police always play an active role in the events described above. **"Police inspectors, together with military registration and enlistment office employees, conduct raids and provide the force component of the events," the Dagestani journalist states.** As for how to circumvent deferments for students, then in a number of cases, as the journalist notes, a "rather mean option" is being used.*

"Students, who completed the ninth grade at school, entered a special educational institution and then a university, are considered to have used their constitutional right to a deferment for the duration of their studies, and therefore they are being called up for military service," the Dagestani journalist explained.

Journalist Idris Yusupov claims that reports of problems with the conscription began to appear at the beginning of this year.*

"Even against the backdrop of mobilization, there were no so many reports of violations. The situation was such that those who did not want to go to the military service left or tried to refuse the conscription under various pretexts. And those who were mobilized or called up joined the army. Even despite the fact that there were protests, there was no so many case of evasion then, in my opinion," Idris Yusupov stated. **He notes that the current situation with the conscription is not entirely clear.***

"There are no clear explanations on the issue. On the one hand, officials from military registration and enlistment offices report that everything is proceeding as usual. On the other hand, at a recent meeting, Makhachkala city Mayor Yusup Umarov expressed his concern over the insufficient number of conscripts," Idris Yusupov* noted. [...]

According to the journalist's information, now officials may be talking about raids on "draft dodgers." Idris Yusupov has also noted that due to the lack of information, people may have questions about deferments for students.*

We need to figure out whether there are violations, abuse of power... This is a question, also for those people whose rights have been violated, to what extent are they ready to appeal against those unlawful actions.

"Here we need to pay attention to the following: if a person entered a university immediately after finishing a school, then he has a deferment for the period of his studies. And if he studied at a college after finishing a school and later entered a university, then he used the deferment for the period of study at the college, and he may be called up during his studies at the university. The same applies to those who fall under the conscription age and who were not called up for military service earlier: they may be called up after they complete their studies, while the conditions for their conscription are met," Idris Yusupov* explained. [...] » Source: Caucasian Knot, Dagestani journalists analyse situation with raids against draft dodgers, 12 juin 2025: <https://eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/66353>

CoE-SG, 30 juin 2025:

« 88. During the reporting period Russia continued to conscript Ukrainian men from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine into its military forces. Around 8 000 thousand persons were expected to be conscripted during the spring conscription campaign from 1 April to 15 July 2025. Concerns were voiced that despite the fact that conscripts cannot participate in military activities, they were persuaded to sign military service contracts and could thus participate in the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine. In addition to the violation of Russia's occupying power's obligations, imposing conscription also violated the right to freedom of movement and consequently access to employment and education.

89. Criminal sanctions continue to be imposed against those who refuse to comply. In the Crimean Peninsula, the number of evasion-related cases continued to rise with 583 cases reported, 274 of which after the start of the Russian Federation's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. While most of the cases seem to result in fines, the law also envisages imprisonment for up to two years. » Source: Council of Europe (CoE-SG), Secretary General: Human rights situation in the territories of Ukraine temporarily controlled or occupied by the Russian Federation, 30 juin 2025, p.25 : [https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2127711/SG_Inf\(2025\)24.pdf](https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2127711/SG_Inf(2025)24.pdf)

DIS / Migrationsverket, mars 2025:

« One of the primary, if not the foremost, reasons for deferral of military service is the pursuit of academic studies. According to Claus Mathiesen, being enrolled in an educational institution would more or less automatically lead to a deferral from military service until the completion or termination of the studies. Due to the widespread prevalence of corruption in Russia, it would also be possible for a person to pay a lower quality university for enrolment despite not intending to fulfil the studies.

However, the rules have become stricter and any documents supporting grounds for deferral due to e.g. studying will likely be checked thoroughly at the Voenkomat. A person who was granted deferral from conscription due to studying one subject, would not be granted deferral should he change the subject of his studies. [...]

According to Sergey Krivenko, the Russian state has become more cautious about bribes, and therefore the possibility of bribing one's way out of conscription has become more difficult. The authorities have also become less lenient when granting deferral to persons already employed by the Russian state. Furthermore, Russian authorities have tightened their efforts to draft conscripts, partly by breaching several of their rights, making it more difficult for people to use their legal rights to avoid performing military duty.

The Russian authorities have reportedly isolated and detained conscripts in Voenkومات, ignored deferrals due to studies and ignored applications for alternative civil service. Furthermore, according to human rights defenders, the conscription through the SCP structure creates a potential for violating the rights of citizens to legally refuse military service. There is reporting of medical personnel at the Voenkومات disregarding medical conditions of persons who are unfit for service, leading to them being drafted despite having legal reasons for deferral. There have also been cases of men who have been previously confirmed unfit for military service being drafted through the practice of so called forced 'one-day' conscription. [...]

4.1. Draft evasion

4.1.1. Legal framework

The definition of draft evasion is the failure, without a valid reason to attend a medical examination, a psychological assessment, and a meeting at the Voenkomat; or by failing to appear at the time and place specified in the summons of the Voenkomat.

Pursuant to article 21.5 of the Code of Administrative Offences, the failure of a citizen to appear without a valid reason at the time and place specified in the summons of the Voenkomat is an offence punishable with a fine in the range of 10 000 to 30 000 rubles [92 to 277 euros]. The same law stipulates that men who are subject to conscription must notify their local recruitment office about their place of residence. Failure to do so is also punishable with a fine.

Draft evasion is further regulated under article 328 of the Criminal Code, which stipulates that illegal evasion of conscription is punishable by a fine of up to 200 000 rubles [1 769 euro], the amount of the salary or other income of the convicted person for a period of up to 18 months, forced labour for up to two years, arrest for up to six months or imprisonment for up to two years. Equally, evasion of ACS is punishable by a fine to up to 80 000 rubles (739 euro), the amount of the wages or other income of the convicted person for a period of up to six months, compulsory labour for a term of up to 480 hours, or by arrest for a term of up to six months. For criminal liability to arise in an evasion case, the attempt to evade military service has to be intentional. The prevalence of intention must be proved in court, which can be done for example by showcasing repeated failures to appear at the Voenkomat without valid reasons. In cases of criminal proceedings on draft evasion, the court must also prove that the person has received proper notification regarding the duty to report to a military recruitment office. The standard time from when

a person has received a summons to when he has to appear at the Voenkomat is around 20 days. Without a legitimate reason for not adhering to the summons, he could potentially be considered a draft evader. The possibilities of leaving the country or hiding in order to avoid conscription have become more limited due to legal amendments, which impose restrictions on draftees and provide the authorities with more efficient methods of searching for draft evaders. [...]

However, the dynamics in Kursk where conscripts have been serving on the frontline since the Ukrainian incursion in August 2024 have changed the view on conscription, and it is increasingly perceived as dangerous. According to Huseyn Aliyev, potential conscripts are now aware that they can end up in border regions such as Kursk and actually risk participating in combat operations, which he estimates will lead to a higher number of draft evaders. During the last ten years, several hundred criminal cases of draft evasion were opened under article 328 per year, which constitutes less than 0.2 percent of the total. Almost all cases concluded with a fine. In 2023, there were 901 such cases, out of which 894 resulted in fines.

Three cases ended with a suspended sentence, and three persons were acquitted. The rest of the cases were dropped for undisclosed reasons. Additionally, there were several thousand administrative fines for not adhering to the summons. In these cases, the offence did not amount to draft evasion, but was rather classified as failure to fulfil obligations connected to the drafting procedure. In the first six months of 2024, Russian courts issued 427 sentences in draft evasion cases, out of which 423 resulted in fines. Three persons received suspended sentences, one person was acquitted and 15 cases were dropped.

4.1.3. Legal repercussions

If a person refuses to adhere to the military procedure and appear at the Voenkomat, it is very unlikely that it will end up as a criminal case, as this will happen only after repeated refusals to show up. Mostly, fines are handed out to draft evaders following the second or third summons that they have received. Huseyn Aliyev explains that if an evasion case passes on to criminal investigation, the case will be handed over to a police investigator and it will be up to the police investigator to decide on the severity of the punishment. In the very few cases of draft evasion that actually go to court, it is very likely that the person in question would be fined, although it will most likely be a higher fine than in administratively settled cases – probably the double of the administrative fine.

Huseyn Aliyev has not seen any evidence of anyone actually being imprisoned for the evasion of conscription. Similar statements are conveyed by two other sources. According to Sergey Krivenko, one or two cases have led to prison sentences in 2023, but this is a rare punishment for evaders. Traditionally, men who do not wish to be drafted have tried to avoid receiving their summons, for example by pretending not to be at home if visited by representatives of the Voenkomat.

If a person evades summoning and the Voenkomat drafts another person to fill the quota, the consequence for the originally summoned individual would depend on whether the Voenkomat has filled out all the proper paper work and sent the case to an investigative committee or not. Sergey Krivenko opines that this is rarely done. According to two

sources, the Russian authorities have no interest in searching for or prosecuting every man who has evaded military service, as they would rather put their efforts into filling their quota.

Paying a fine for draft evasion does not mean that a person would be excluded from future drafts. A person evading one draft risks being summoned again in future drafts, provided he is still within the age of conscription. Yet, every draft is decided upon by a presidential decree. Consequently, a conscript evading the draft in the autumn and subsequently caught after the quota of that draft is filled would not necessarily be given a summons in the next draft. Huseyn Aliyev explains that there are cases of persons who have been fined and were given a new summons basically the next day. Furthermore, a summons can also be handed out at the point of entry to Russia, such as international airports.

The Voenkomat searches for evaders in collaboration with local police. Once a person has signed the summons, the Voenkomat has the right to detain the person in question. At the same time, according to Freedom House, Russia is a large country, so if a person wants to evade conscription and hide this is possible inside the country. Life would be rather difficult and limited (e.g. trying to avoid leaving digital footprints), but it would be possible. Equally, it is possible to leave the country to evade conscription and the source dismisses the narrative of the 'iron curtain.'

The authorities would not use extrajudicial punishments outside the ranks against draft evaders. If they catch a draft evader, they will prosecute him. As for political opponents to the regime, Mark Galeotti states that if a person evades conscription, he will be prosecuted accordingly. Although, a judge may be more likely to rule against a person, if they come to court wearing for example a Navalny t-shirt. [...]

4.1.6. Sentenced in absentia

Several of the sources consulted claimed they had not heard of draft evaders being sentenced in absentia. Instead, a draft evader would be put on a wanted list and the criminal proceeding suspended until he reappears. Huseyn Aliyev claims that there is a tendency in Russia to charge an individual when they actually have the person in question arrested or the authorities have access to this individual. If a person has left the country in order to avoid conscription, he will likely only be charged once he returns to Russia. The border officials will have all the necessary information and data to detain the person. The source from Freedom House elaborates that applying sentences in absentia for draft evaders would lead to a delicate situation as many from the Russian elite have their young family members abroad. Sentencing draft evaders in absentia would create a precedence, which would have to be applied to everyone. The source therefore doubts that sentencing draft evaders in absentia will be implemented. Also, the source was not aware of draft evaders residing abroad who were deported back to Russia solely on the basis of draft evasion.

Claus Mathiesen claimed not to have encountered any cases of draft evaders being sentenced in absentia, although he estimated that it is likely to have happened. According to Mark Galeotti, there have been cases of conscripts being sentenced in absentia although it is very difficult to truly tell the numbers.

Sergey Krivenko conveys that there are no public systems allowing persons outside of Russia to know if their case has been sent to criminal investigation. [...]

Conscripts support the war effort in Ukraine through logistical tasks, i.e. as drivers, mechanics, or as delivery staff, etc. Additionally, conscripts have operated checkpoints, have forwarded observation posts and have assisted FPV drone teams. Rear artillery positions are also staffed by conscripts.

Conscripts have been actively used to guard the Russian-Ukrainian border since the autumn of 2022. By Russian law, conscripts can only be posted inside Russian territory, and most sources agree that conscripts do not serve in Ukraine proper.

Russia considers the annexed Ukrainian regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia part of the Russian territory. The question of whether conscripts serve in these regions is debated among the interviewed sources. Some sources believe that conscripts are not posted in the annexed regions. Other sources believe that conscripts are in fact posted in the annexed regions.

Russian law prohibits using conscripts in combat units, and the majority of sources believe, that conscripts are therefore not used for combat duties including in the annexed regions. In the initial stages of the full-scale invasion, there were reports about conscripts having taken part in combat duties in Ukraine, as well as being taken as prisoners of war (POWs) by the Ukrainian military. This was also acknowledged by the Russian MoD.

According to more recent reporting from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), Russian officials have assured the Russian public that conscripts will not be deployed to most of occupied Ukraine or participate in combat operations in Ukraine, although they will likely attempt to coerce and deceive conscripts into signing contracts with the Russian military in order to fight in Ukraine.

According to sources who believed that conscripts are posted in Ukraine, these conscripts are performing duties supporting the Russian war effort such as constructing defensive fortifications or digging trenches. Despite not being deployed for active combat, conscripts serving near the front lines do however still risk being subjected to Ukrainian drone attacks or missile attacks. According to Huseyn Aliyev, ending up in one of the annexed regions would put a conscript in a desperate situation, as he would be at much higher risk of sustaining life threatening injuries there than in any other part of Russia. Huseyn Aliyev further elaborates, that there have been cases where military barracks housing conscripts have been hit by long-range Ukrainian missiles in Luhansk and Donetsk, but conscripts serving in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia would be less likely to be hit.

6.3. Conscripts in the Kursk region

The situation for conscripts in the Kursk region is unique compared to Russian conscripts deployed to other regions. Prior to the Kursk incursion, the majority of Russian forces on the border with Ukraine was made up of conscripts. When the offensive commenced, conscripts therefore took the heaviest blows.

There are no official numbers of casualties of conscripts in the Kursk region, nor is there a consensus on this matter among the consulted sources. According to Huseyn Aliyev, more than a thousand conscripts have lost their lives and many have been taken prisoner since the beginning of the Kursk incursion. Irina Novik is aware of at least 13 conscripts being killed in the region of Kursk. According to an article from the BBC, at least 159 Russian conscripts have been confirmed dead since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

According to Russian law, conscripts may only be deployed for combat in peacekeeping operations or in anti-terrorist operations. The Ukrainian presence in Kursk has, however, been classified as a terrorist incursion by Russian officials, meaning that conscripts may in fact be deployed for combat in Kursk. Refusing to fight in Kursk, therefore also constitutes a criminal offense.

Since most conscripts have only had very basic military training, they generally make for poor combat soldiers, and they are most likely used only defensively in Kursk and not used to attack Ukrainian positions. Conscripts in the Kursk region could, however, be posted in the second line of defence holding, improving and expanding these positions and thereby supporting the regular troops and their assault operations.

Once source, however, opines that conscripts are used offensively as well as defensively in the region of Kursk. The Russian casualties in the Kursk region are high, and a conscript initially serving somewhere else in Russia, does risk being transferred to a military unit in the Kursk region to replenish the ranks.

Freedom House opines that although Russian law prohibits the deployment of conscripts on the front line, there are cases of junior conscripts being sent to the front line without any proper training to be used as “cannon fodder”. This source as the only one among the interviewed sources opined that conscripts are not only used on the front line in the region of Kursk but also inside Ukraine proper, and that military commanders try to avoid casualties amongst their more qualified soldiers by using conscripts in areas under heavy Ukrainian fire. However, there is a level of uncertainty and it is not possible to know in advance, who is going to be sent to the frontline. None of the consulted sourced had heard of incidents, where conscripts were used to guard or transport Ukrainian prisoners of war. [...]

7.2. Pressure to sign contracts

The Russian authorities exercise pressure over conscripts to convince them to sign contracts with the MoD. Much of such pressure is driven by cultures within the military. The military has been told that they have to persuade a certain amount of people each month to sign contracts and then they find ways of doing that. Pressure exercised by the authorities takes place in nearly every military unit and the forms of the pressure can differ. Sometimes the command seeks to convince the conscript by using moral pressure. Physical violence in order to pressure a conscript to sign a contract is rare, but according to Sergey Krivenko, such cases do occur.

The units posted in the border regions with Ukraine are under the most pressure to sign contracts, as the governors of the regions and the local military officials are under considerable pressure from the Kremlin to recruit more people into the Armed Forces. They

are quite heavily reliant on these forcible methods of attracting conscripts and they are the ones that are increasing the amounts of financial rewards. Some conscripts can be forced to sign a contract. There is a so-called blame and shame culture meaning that not signing a contract in front of the other soldiers could be considered shameful. In some military bases, some conscripts are labelled as cowards by having their photographs pinned on boards for all to see (for an example of this method please see the interview in Annex 2 Aliyev).

It is possible to refuse to sign a contract. Doing so could, however, cause problems with the officers, who can make life very difficult for the conscript in question. Furthermore, his fellow soldiers would not see him as a real man. This type of peer pressure can be psychologically tough for many conscripts. A more widespread approach for the authorities to make conscripts sign contracts with the MoD seems to be a forcible approach, where conscripts are threatened with physical punishment. They could for instance risk being locked in the basement until they sign a contract. According to Huseyn Aliyev, there are various reports that hundreds of conscripts have been locked in facilities in Donetsk and Luhansk regions for months.

There have been cases where a conscript's signature has been falsified, and as a result, the conscripts are being sent as contract soldiers to Ukraine. If this happens, it is possible for the conscript to file a complaint through his family or relatives, although it is rather difficult. In other cases, conscripts have received the one-time pay-off that a soldier receives upon signing a contract with the military before actually having signed the contract. In these cases, the pressure on the conscript to sign up is immense, and in fact not actively returning the money could be considered as acceptance of contract duty by default.

There have been cases of contracts being written and presented to conscripts without any prior indication that they wanted to sign up. In one particular case, the authorities persuaded a conscript to sign an initial report about whether one would sign a contract or not. However, the report that he was forced to sign, was in fact not an initial report, but an actual contract with the MoD. In other cases, contracts have been signed by a conscript's commander without the consent or knowledge of the conscript. One source stressed that signing up as a contract soldier is not a one-step procedure; rather it requires at least two steps. Firstly, one should sign an application on one's desire to join the contract service. Sometime later, the person will sign the contract itself, and there is still a possibility to refuse in the second step of this procedure. The source is aware of situations where people have changed their minds, and with the help from human rights defenders, they managed to halt the procedure so that these persons managed to avoid contract service.

If a person has already signed a contract, the only way to avoid fulfilling the contract is by taking the case to court. The chance of getting out of the contract is about 50/50, and human rights organisations try to help conscripts in these cases. » Source: Danish Immigration Service (DIS) / Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket), Russia; Conscript, mars 2025 : <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2122621/report-march-2025-conscription-in-russia.pdf>

Euronews, 1er octobre 2024:

« New conscripts undergo one to two months of basic training, followed by three to six months of advanced training before arriving at their assigned units.

Current law states that conscripts cannot be deployed to combat with less than four months of training and cannot be deployed outside of Russia — therefore, to the war in Ukraine.

Yet, many of them are.

How do Russian conscripts end up in Ukraine?

Conscripts cannot legally be deployed to fight outside Russia, but very often, they end up on the other side of the border by way of signing up for professional army post-conscription.

The Russian NGO “Get Lost” supports people trying to avoid conscription, which often results in signing a contract, even unwillingly.

Ivan Chuvilyaev said that conscripts are increasingly being forced to sign contracts with the Russian military. “An enlisted soldier finds himself in a very difficult situation. In fact, he has no options not to be on a contract,” Chuvilyaev told Euronews.

He explained that at first, soldiers are persuaded to do so with arguments like “everyone has signed, but you haven’t yet, and everyone has received money, but you haven’t.”

If this doesn’t work, they are promised things, such as “If you sign, we will send you to serve in a safe region somewhere in the Urals or Siberia or close to home (and) if you don’t sign, you will go to a zone where conscripts can be sent by law.”

But even without a contract, conscripts can be sent to illegally annexed Crimea or Russian regions of Belgorod, Kursk and Bryansk — which Chuvilyaev said are not any safer than temporarily occupied territories in Ukrainian regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, where fierce fighting continues on the ground.

“Finally, the main thing is that the practice of falsifying documents is very widely used. The contract is signed for the conscript (by recruiters who) put an ‘x’ in the signature box. The soldier finds out about it when he receives a bank card and documents about allowance,” Chuvilyaev explained. » Euronews, Russia's autumn conscription: How many of the 133,000 draftees will end up in Ukraine?, 1er octobre 2024: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/10/01/russias-autumn-conscription-how-many-of-the-133000-draftees-will-end-up-in-ukraine>

HRC, 15 septembre 2025:

« 91. Desertion has become one of the main avenues for those seeking to avoid participating in the war. Estimates indicate that over 50,000 Russian soldiers had deserted since 2022, representing nearly 10 per cent of all Russian troops in Ukraine. Since 2022, more than 16,000 military personnel have been prosecuted for desertion-related offences, with over 13,500 conscripts and contract soldiers convicted in 2024.

92. The “disobeying orders” charge is applied to men, including injured soldiers, who refuse to fight. Torture and ill-treatment, including beatings, starvation and death threats, are used to “enforce discipline” and compel compliance with military orders. So-called “torture pits” were created at training grounds to punish soldiers who try to escape fighting on the front lines in Ukraine.

93. Following legislative amendments in 2024, 44 criminal suspects, accused persons and convicts can have their sentences commuted or prosecutions dropped for signing military contracts, which has expanded the recruitment pool for deployment to the war. Around 12 per cent of all suspects sign military contracts, with police officers receiving financial remuneration for each signed contract. Since 2022, approximately 200,000 inmates have been recruited, contributing to the reported closure of nearly 80 of the 900 penitentiary institutions as of July 2025.

94. By February 2025, investigative journalists at Vyorstka, an online media outlet, calculated that over 750 people had been killed or severely injured by returning combatants, including 378 deaths and 376 life-threatening injuries. In September 2024, a cannibal convicted to 25 years’ imprisonment was freed after fighting in Ukraine. In November 2024, a former soldier, sentenced to 20 years in prison for killing 13 people, returned to the frontlines after signing a new contract.

95. The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation denies having information on missing soldiers. In November 2024, the Deputy Defence Minister stated that 48,000 relatives had submitted DNA to identify remains, although some submissions were duplicates. The Ukrainian “Want to Find” initiative has received more than 88,000 inquiries regarding missing Russian servicemen, while the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has registered 110,000 missing person cases.

96. The Ministry of Defence has enlisted foreign nationals, including trafficked persons from Nepal and Sri Lanka, into the army, coercing them into signing contracts through torture and threats.

97. As reported in 2024, conscripts are forced, through torture and deceit, into signing military contracts that allow them to be sent to the front lines. In at least one case, a person was shot dead for refusing to sign the contract. [...]

119. Disproportionate targeting of Indigenous Peoples for military mobilization, often forced, to the war on Ukraine continues, even where communities risk extinction from war casualties.

[...]

124. In May 2025, the head of the Investigative Committee, Alexander Bastrykin, revealed that 80,000 recent recipients of Russian citizenship, primarily from Central Asia, have been forced to register for military service, with 20,000 already deployed to the front lines. » Source: UN Human Rights Council (HRC), Situation of human rights in the Russian Federation; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova, 15 septembre 2025 : <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2130280/a-hrc-60-59-aev.pdf>

HRC, 28 mai 2025:

« 16. Under international humanitarian law, the occupying Power may not compel protected persons to serve in its armed forces or exercise any pressure or use propaganda that aims at securing voluntary enlistment. Several actions by the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation may have violated these obligations.

17. In October 2024, the Russian Federation conducted its annual military conscription campaign, including in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Information about the number of people conscripted in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine was not publicly available at the time of writing. [...]

20. The occupying authorities of the Russian Federation also provided additional financial incentives for residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to join the Russian armed forces. In addition to a one-time payment of 400,000 roubles (approximately \$3,500) offered to all eligible Russian citizens and foreigners signing a contract with the Russian armed forces between 1 August and 31 December 2024, the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation in Crimea offered an additional 400,000 roubles or, for residents of the city of Sevastopol, an additional 500,000 roubles (approximately \$4,400) for joining the Russian armed forces during the same period. [...]

37. In one case, a man was fined 35,000 roubles (\$307) for “discrediting the use of the Russian armed forces” because, when refusing to accept a conscription notice at a military conscription office in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, he said that he did not want to serve “a government of terrorists” and that he was against the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation and the “special military operation” in Ukraine. » Source: UN Human Rights Council (HRC), Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol; Report of the Secretary-General, 28 May 2025, p.4-5, 8 : <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2126551/q2507785.pdf>

Meduza, 20 février 2020:

« At least 25 Russian conscripts were killed in the Kursk region when Ukrainian troops launched a surprise incursion last summer, according to journalists at Vertska Media who studied media reports and obituaries published on social media.

All 25 conscripts died early in Ukraine’s campaign, between August and September 2024. The men were between the ages of 18 and 23. They’d been called up from 18 different regions across Russia, including Vologda and Krasnodar Krai.

Vertska Media reports that Russian border troops initially responded to Ukraine’s attack with “chaos and a lack of coordination.” Many officers reportedly abandoned their men without weapons or clear instructions, dozens of conscripts were captured or went missing (many remain so), and young soldiers who escaped Ukraine’s advancing troops were later pressured to enlist as contract soldiers under threat of imprisonment before being sent back to fight.

Not to be confused with combat-service mobilization, Russian conscription applies to men between the ages of 18 and 30. Under Russia’s existing practices, conscript

soldiers are not sent into combat without a declaration of war (which Moscow has not done in its “special military operation” in Ukraine). » Source: Meduza, 25 Russian conscripts were killed last summer in Ukraine's surprise incursion into the Kursk region — Vertska Media, 20 février 2025: <https://meduza.io/en/news/2025/02/20/25-russian-conscripts-were-killed-last-summer-in-ukraine-s-surprise-incursion-into-the-kursk-region-vertska-media>

Minbuza, 14 février 2025:

« Ignoring a summons – criminal and administrative penalties

Evading military service is punishable under Article 328 of the Penal Code (PC). Evading military service occurs if a conscript has failed to report to the military recruiting office to begin his compulsory military service or to apply for a deferral, after receiving a summons. According to sources from the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), a criminal case for evading military service could be brought if a conscript had ignored calls during two or more rounds of recruitment without objecting to the summons and if summonses had been served in accordance with the law. Summonses issued during the autumn round of conscription in 2024, pending the electronic Uniform Military Register, still had to be served personally and signed by the conscript, or delivered to the conscript by registered mail. According to the EUAA and a lawyer, in most criminal cases, only fines were imposed, and not detention.

Penalties for offences other than evading military service are set out in the Code of Administrative Offences (CAO). Failure to comply with a summons to provide data to the recruitment office was an administrative – not criminal – offence. The fine for failing to appear at the military recruitment office was increased tenfold to 30,000 roubles under the law of the July 2023, with effect from 1 October 2023 (Article 21.5 CAO). Since October 2023, failure to report leaving Russia for a period of more than six months, or having re-entered the country, has been subject to a trebled fine of 15,000 roubles, as has failure to report changes in employment, married status, study or residence address.

Residents of Crimea were forced into compulsory national service, including – and especially – Crimean Tatars. Between February 2022 and May 2024, 206 cases of criminal charges for evading military service in Crimea were recorded.

Ignoring summonses – other measures

In addition to making it more difficult to evade military service and the threat of penalties, the following measures were also taken in April 2023 to discourage the evasion of military service. If an individual fails to report to the recruitment office within twenty days of receiving the summons, a number of restrictive measures will go into effect: the individual will no longer be allowed to drive a car, can no longer receive benefits, can no longer make transactions involving real estate, cannot register a company with the Chamber of Commerce and can no longer take out a loan. Since 1 October 2023, fines have risen to a maximum of 30,000 roubles. The restrictive measures, including the travel ban, can be lifted after the individual has reported to a recruitment office. These measures became legally effective immediately after their introduction, even if the digital system was not yet in place. Due to practical difficulties in implementation, however,

automatic application had not yet taken place during the reporting period; at most, case-by-case application occurred. [...]

Evading military service and desertion

All the measures mentioned above – digital summonses, measures if summonses are not heeded – are intended to make refusal of military service more difficult. The government is thus focusing more on preventing the refusal of military service and desertion than on criminal prosecution. According to one source, one reason for this is the lack of capacity in military courts to criminally prosecute people who refused to perform compulsory national service or deserters.

Evading military service

Evading military service (Article 328 PC) may be punishable by detention of up to two years during a mobilisation period. In the case of conscripts, desertion occurs only if they have already been called up in accordance with the proper procedure and assigned to a military unit. Before one has been assigned to a military unit, the following acts thus do not fall under draft evasion and are therefore subject to administrative prosecution only: failing to respond to the summons or refusing to report to the military unit to which one has been assigned if one has not yet undergone a medical examination; feigning illness; changing residence without notifying the authorities; or leaving the Russian Federation without being deregistered.

According to a calculation by opposition news website Verstka, 958 people were convicted of draft evasion, Article 328(1) PC, in 2023. In the first half of 2024, 427 people were convicted of this, according to the website. Incarceration was not imposed in any of these cases, only fines. Only an exceptionally small number of defendants were fined more than 100,000 roubles: ten in 2023, and five in the first half of 2024. No figures are available on the number of administrative prosecutions. [...]

Deployment of conscripts in Ukraine

According to a presidential decree, conscripts must have completed at least four months of military service and training to be sent to combat missions, unless a state of war is declared, which had not happened as of the end of the reporting period. If a state of war has been declared, however, conscripts can be called up earlier, and not just after four months. Although it is thus legally possible to deploy conscripts for combat operations, as far as is known, Russia did not send out conscripts to the temporarily occupied territories in Ukraine during the reporting period. According to one source, however, conscripts were deployed in illegally annexed Crimea. Unlike conscripts, contract soldiers can be deployed in combat operations from the moment of taking the military oath, which must take place no later than two months after beginning military training. Conscripts can sign a contract after starting their compulsory national service.

Deployment of conscripts in Kursk and Belgorod

Deployment of conscripts in combat areas did occur during the reporting period in battles outside Ukraine (in other words, in Kursk and Belgorod), where Ukrainian forces had

invaded Russian territory. Although no official figures are available on the number of conscript fatalities, there were reports of hundreds of conscripts deployed in defence in the Kursk and Belgorod region, and dozens who died, were taken prisoner of war by Ukrainian forces or with whom there was no further contact. On 1 November 2024, RFERL referred to at least three deaths among conscripts in the Kursk region and more than eighty missing.

In August 2024, BBC Russia estimated the total number of conscripts killed since the beginning of the Russian invasion in February 2022 to be at least 159. In mid-August 2024, mothers of Russian conscripts evacuated from the front line in the Kursk region said that their sons, under threat of criminal prosecution, had been forced to sign contracts and return to the front. According to them, in one of the military units in the Kursk region, there had been about 150 conscripts who had been pressured to sign a contract.

Conscripts were deployed in the Kursk region for border surveillance and similar tasks. It is not known what further tasks conscripts had to perform. [...]

Recruitment of conscripts

Since July 2023, conscripts have been able to enter into a contract almost immediately after the start of their compulsory military service (conscription). In July 2023, the Duma passed legislation allowing conscripts to enter into a contract for military service 'for a period of one year or less'. It should be noted that, in practice, during mobilisation, temporary contracts are not temporary, but valid indefinitely.

Error

In some cases, conscripts were persuaded by their commander to sign a so-called 'fixed-term' contract. Later, it became apparent that these temporary contracts were also valid indefinitely during the war. Interim termination was not possible.

Other conscripts reported that they had unexpectedly been paid salaries much higher than their compulsory military service pay. For example, in October 2024, media reported on at least seven conscripts, each of which had received 305 thousand roubles because they had supposedly signed a contract with the Ministry of Defence. They nevertheless knew nothing about this. In these cases, it is suspected that the contracts had been signed for them. From their compulsory military service station, it was virtually impossible to take legal action against this with the aim of having such a contract dissolved by a court. The Duma referred to payments based on fake contracts as 'technical error'.

Coercion with conscripts

Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the recruitment of conscripts as contract soldiers was commonplace. During the reporting period, independent media and NGOs reported that conscripts were increasingly being pressured to sign a contract. The scale at which coercion was actually used is not known, however, as conscripts are not very likely to make this widely known. The Russian military has a traditional culture of violent hazing or 'dedovschina'.

The increasing pressure is also evidenced by the following. In March 2024, the independent news platform Verstka reported that conscripts could be forced to sign a military contract by persuasion, an attractive salary, error regarding the length of the contract, and if refused, also by verbal and physical violence. However, by signing a document prior to compulsory national service stating that one did not wish to sign a contract, one purportedly had another chance to refuse in spring 2024. In autumn 2024, eight months later, Verstka – referring to the NGOs Go to the Forest and School of Conscript – reported on an increase in cases in which conscripts were forced to sign a military contract since August 2024. In addition, according to the same reports, there have been cases in which conscripts were pressured to sign a military contract at a much earlier stage than before – in the first days of compulsory national service.

Some extreme cases of assault and killing appeared in the media. In early December 2024, independent Russian media reported on a 19-year-old conscript, Artyom Antonov, from Tatarstan, who had refused to sign a contract and fight in the Kursk region while fulfilling his compulsory military service on the border with China. According to reports, this conscript had been abused by his superiors with a metal rod to get him to sign, and he was eventually killed.

The family of another conscript, Andrei Lazhiev, also reported that he had suffered a fatal head wound in beatings because he refused to sign a contract. The actual facts could not be verified.

According to one source, not every conscript was forced to sign a contract, nor did they succeed in persuading every conscript by force. Commanders would direct their threats of violence and humiliation, and their actual application, primarily against those who were less powerful and less informed about their rights. Compared to candidate contract soldiers, conscripts were more often exposed to coercion and threats of force, or actual applications of force, given that they were already in military barracks. According to this source, coercion by force was therefore more common amongst conscripts than it was amongst contract soldiers, who decide to sign a contract from civilian life. » Source: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Minbuza), Thematic Country of Origin Information Report on the Russian Federation; Military service; LGBTIQ+; critics and opponents, 14 février 2025, p.7-22 : <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2125040/netherlands-mfa-coi-report-russian-federation-february-2025.pdf>

Platform RAAM, 21 mai 2025:

« Meanwhile, a vast black market has emerged to serve Russian civilians desperate to avoid conscription. Before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, buying a military exemption document (a so-called 'white ticket') could cost between 90,000 and 450,000 rubles (\$1,100 and \$5,600 under current exchange rate). After the announcement of mobilization, prices surged - by early 2023, forged exemption papers with a deferral-qualifying diagnosis were being sold on the dark web for over a million rubles (around \$12,500). More elaborate schemes, such as fake medical records or staged diagnoses of chronic illness, could cost up to 7 million (around \$87,000). Telegram channels posing as legal aid groups, like one called Pacifist, privately offered to make conscripts 'disappear' from draft databases for hundreds of thousands of rubles. Others sold spots in companies with military deferrals, such as the Ulan-Ude locomotive plant or forestry services -

though new rules introduced in March 2025 have significantly narrowed the list of employers eligible for such exemptions.

Even legal assistance has been absorbed into the shadow economy. According to Meduza, a booming industry of private firms now promises to guide conscripts through the draft process, often charging exorbitant fees - 150,000 to 200,000 rubles (about \$1,900 to \$2,500) - for 'support' that rarely leads to real results. These firms claim they can help clients avoid conscription through legal means. In many cases, medical diagnoses that should disqualify draftees are simply ignored by local draft boards - something that is less likely to happen when a conscript is represented by a lawyer. However, human rights advocates warn that many of these firms function less as legal defense and more as intermediaries in a corrupt system. Some are run by former draft board staff or maintain personal ties to military officials and doctors. Elena Popova from the Conscious Objectors Movement criticized this ecosystem, arguing that 'people are feeding the system that's sending them to war.' In Buryatia, human rights activist Nadezhda Nizovkina said the black market has become entangled with law enforcement: some doctors now cooperate with authorities to expose would-be draft dodgers, turning what once was a bribery scheme into a setup. Meduza also reports that some officials facing corruption charges, such as former draft officers Almaz Burganov and Sergei Trigilev, have avoided prosecution by signing military contracts and being sent to fight in Ukraine. »
Source: Platform RAAM, Russia's largest conscription campaign in years runs on brute force and deception, 21 mai, 2025 : <https://platformraam.nl/artikelen/2821-russias-largest-conscription-campaign-in-years-runs-on-brute-force-and-deception>

RFE/RL, 3 août 2025:

« [...] From Barracks To Body Bags

Following Russia's legal reform in 2023, conscripts can now be forced to sign military contracts on the first day of service. Despite Putin's 2022 assurances that draftees wouldn't be sent to the war, thousands have been deployed -- and many never return.

On July 23, three Russian conscripts, Daniyar Kereibaev, Yury Vitsinets, and Denis Mozhaitsev, aged 18–19, recorded a video on YouTube stating they were tricked into signing indefinite military contracts.

After arriving at the 37th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade, military unit 69647, in the city of Kyakhta, they said their platoon commander began threatening conscripts with deployment to the front -- describing a destroyed transport full of recruits and claiming a 30 percent casualty rate in the Kursk region -- implying they were unlikely to survive unless they signed military contracts.

During Ukraine's counteroffensive into Kursk in August 2024, conscripts, many aged 18 to 20, suffered heavy casualties. Journalists identified over 100 conscripts killed, captured, or listed as missing.

One chilling case is that of Artyom Antonov, a 19-year-old conscript from Tatarstan, who was shot in the head at a base in the Far Eastern city of Ussuriisk after refusing to sign a contract.

"Artyom didn't want to fight," said his friend Igor. "They made a concentration camp out of the army."

His death was no anomaly. Dozens of conscripts from rural, impoverished ethnic republics -- including Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Daghestan, Tuva, Kalmykia, Udmurtia, and Buryatia -- have been reported dead after similar coercion.

Some conscripts say they were unaware they had even signed contracts. Others, like 10 soldiers who rioted in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk in November, resisted deployment and were immediately branded deserters.

Ethnic Targeting: First In Line

Multiple reports confirm that ethnic minorities are among the first to be coerced. Relatives of an inmate in the Tula region told RFE/RL that 15 non-Russian prisoners were forced to sign contracts under threat of additional extremism charges.

Some imprisoned migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus are also recruited with promises of clemency, Russian citizenship, and money. Often, they receive nothing.

"Ethnicity plays a role," one prison insider said. "The authorities view these groups as expendable." » Source: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Inside Russia's Shadow Battalions: Coercion, Violence, And Ethnic Targeting, 3 août 2025 : <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2128360.html>

RFE/RL, 20 mai 2025:

« [...] Conscripts in combat.

With the invasion nearing its 40th month, Russian troops continue to suffer eye-watering casualties: upward of 750,000 dead and wounded, according to Western estimates, and climbing as this year's spring fighting season kicks into high gear.

Despite the toll, Russia has managed to sustain its tempo of operations by relying on an elaborate recruitment system of mobilized reserves, volunteers, private mercenaries, and even prison inmates, plus regular units. Sky-high wages and benefits for combat service have resulted in a steady flow of men sent into battle.

But Russian law forbids conscripts -- men, mostly around 18 years of age, completing one year of mandatory military service -- from serving in combat zones. First and foremost, that means Ukraine.

Putin has promised repeatedly that conscripts would not be sent to fight. But they can be enlisted to do rear-guard tasks such as logistical or construction work away from active combat zones.

They can also be persuaded -- or coerced -- into signing full volunteer combat contracts after just four months of basic training. Often, the conscripts do not fully understand what they're signing, activists and lawyers said.

Last summer, Ukrainian forces staged a cross-border invasion into Russia's Kursk region, overwhelming the lightly defended border and border guard troops, National Guard units, and other troops. Dozens of conscripts were also captured or went missing during the invasion. At least 25 were killed, according to the news outlet Vyorstka. [...]

Conscripts' Gray Zone

Russian officials have refused to acknowledge what is more or less an open secret, particularly among military families: that conscripts indeed have been caught up, deliberately or negligently, in combat along the border with Ukraine.

There's a legal loophole to the ban on sending conscripts into battle. After just four months, the young men are allowed to sign contracts, effectively volunteering for full duty, including combat deployment.

However, officers and military recruiters routinely pressure, and coerce, conscripts to sign contracts, without providing full disclosure or disclaimer or other relevant information, activists, lawyers, and even parents have complained.

Last October, several conscripts from a Russian tank division received 305,000 rubles (\$3,600) in compensation after they complained they signed fake contracts with the Defense Ministry.

That same month, Aleksandr, who did not sign any such volunteer contract, said he was wounded again when a fragment of a kamikaze drone hit him in his left leg. He was transferred off the front line and hospitalized at a military clinic back in Borzja, where his unit was originally dispatched from.

Military doctors were reluctant to accurately diagnose his injury, he said, since he was a conscript and the injury was a combat injury, which would contravene legal prohibitions. That meant he was ineligible also for an additional payment for suffering a war injury.

He was released from conscription on December 10, 2024, a year to the day when he entered service. [...] » Source: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Russian Conscripts Can't Be Sent Into Battle. This One Was. And He's Not Happy About It, 20 mai 2025 : <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2126145.html>

RFE/RL, 5 avril 2025:

« [...] Russia has been secretive about the number of casualties it has suffered since launching its full-scale invasion in February 2022. Western estimates say the number of Russian killed and wounded exceeds 700,000 -- more than all wars Moscow has fought combined since World War II. [...]

The spring conscription is part of the twice-a-year conscription process under Russian law, which requires all men between 18-30 to serve in the military. The order signed on March 31 by Putin aims for 160,000 conscripts, which is well above previous recruitment targets.

Modernizing The Army

Since the February 2022 invasion, authorities have also sought to modernize the Soviet-era system for identifying men -- conscripts and reservists alike -- for recruitment or drafting.

Officials have created an electronic system of notification and registrations to cut back on draft dodging as well.

"They'll use various methods to reach this number," said Ivan Chuvilyayev, from a non-government organization called Go By The Forest, which helps Russians being drafted.

"They'll do everything they've done so far: raids in all sorts of places, including coming to people's home addresses and forcing entry, tracking them down, waiting for them outside their apartments," he told Current Time.

The new system also includes something called the Unified Draft Center, or EPP, which is supposed to speed up the processing of recruits -- and reduce the ability of people to file legal or administrative appeals or exemptions.

"There's a raid, they take the person to the EPP, and do the paperwork very quickly, within 5-10 minutes before sending him to a military unit," Chuvilyayev said. "It's done so that the whole time he's at the EPP he can't speak to anyone, can't call anyone, can't reach family members."

At present, there's only one EPP, in Moscow, but others across Russia may follow. The Defense Ministry says it "speeds up and simplifies" recruitment, offering "comfortable waiting rooms" and "no queues."

"They file complaints, often repeatedly, not to defend their rights, but to evade military service," Andrei Kartapolov, a former military officer who serves on the defense committee in the lower house of parliament, said during a debate in February on a bill to tighten conscription rules.

He said there were around 5,000 such complaints in each draft.

No Sick Notes Accepted

Russian recruitment offices were also not accepting medical conditions that would normally exempt people from military service, Chuvilyayev said. He said he expected new EPPs would increase this practice.

"At the EPP these diagnoses and the papers relating to them will be swept under the carpet. The commissions will ignore them. The military enlistment offices already loved losing, forgetting, and ignoring them," he said.

Though conscripts are legally barred from being sent to combat, recruiters are known to have coerced or threatened conscripts before the conclusion of their service into signing contracts to fight in Ukraine.

"Most of the time they have no access to lawyers or human rights organizations; they simply have no choice," Artyom Klyga, a lawyer with the Movement of Conscientious Objectors, told RFE/RL last month.

Russian law bars kontraktniki from resigning from service until the Kremlin declares an end to the conflict.

There are also reports of conscripts being killed in Kursk, the Russian region that Ukrainian troops invaded last August but have since been all but pushed out of. » Source: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Russia Seeks To Fill Ranks With Raids And 'Comfortable Waiting Rooms', 5 avril 2025 : <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2123895.html>

RFE/RL, 19 mars 2025:

« In March 2022, weeks after ordering a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin pledged to "mothers, wives, sisters, and fiancées" that he would deploy only "professional military personnel" in what has become Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II.

That pledge quickly rang hollow, with numerous reports that young conscripts were being coerced into signing military contracts almost immediately after induction and shipped to the front line in what the Kremlin calls its "special military operation."

Three years later, Russian conscripts are still being sent to the front -- and dying -- after signing such contracts, activists and relatives say.

"The Russian Army finds it relatively easy to recruit 18- and 19-year-old conscripts," Artyom Klyga, a lawyer with the Movement of Conscientious Objectors, a Russian anti-war group, told RFE/RL.

"These young soldiers are frequently encouraged to sign a contract to become professional soldiers, often without fully understanding what they are agreeing to," Klyga added.

Ahead of Russia's spring draft set to begin on April 1, the Russian-language news outlet Vyorstka reported that at least 25 conscripts were killed in Russia's western Kursk region following Ukraine's surprise incursion there in August.

The average age of these conscripts was 20, according to Vyorstka, which based its figure on an analysis of news reports and obituaries posted on social media. Many of their deaths only became known in recent months.

One of the Russian conscripts killed in Kursk was 19-year-old Zakhar Sosnin, whose family told RFE/RL's Siberia Realities they were in the dark about how he ended up signing a military contract.

"We found out later. We still don't understand why he signed it. We were told that he 'died in the battle for the Kursk region,' and that's it. He was just a child," one of his relatives said.

Klyga told RFE/RL that Russian law technically prevents conscripts from being deployed to combat with less than four months of service. If they sign a contract, however, they can be sent immediately.

"Most of the time they have no access to lawyers or human rights organizations -- they simply have no choice," he said.

In some cases, relatives have said they are certain their conscripted sons did not sign military contracts. [...]

While many Russian families are outraged with the government for reneging on Putin's pledge not to send young, inexperienced men to the front lines, public resistance is rare amid the Kremlin's escalating crackdown on dissent since the beginning of the Kremlin's all-out war on Ukraine, Russian military analyst Yan Matveev told RFE/RL. [...] » Source: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Putin's Broken Promise: Young Russian Conscripts Dying In Ukraine Invasion, 19 mars 2025: <https://www.rferl.org/a/russian-conscripts-youth-dying-ukraine-putin/33351828.html>

United 24 Media, 16 décembre 2024:

« Three Russian conscripts from Sakhalin, who had been engaged in a legal battle with the Russian Ministry of Defense over forged military contracts, have been killed in combat during Russia's war against Ukraine, according to a report by Okno.

The conscripts, including 21-year-old Viktor Baturin, had spent nine months challenging the authenticity of their contracts in court. It was only after their deaths that experts officially confirmed their signatures had been falsified.

Viktor Baturin, drafted in November 2023, was deployed in a high-casualty assault near Yelyzavetivka in the Pokrovsky district of Donetsk region on November 23, 2024. His remains were never recovered from the battlefield.

Less than a month before his death, Baturin had sustained shrapnel injuries to his arm and leg. Despite his mother's attempts to bring him home for recovery, he was sent to the front lines with untreated wounds. While his fellow soldiers confirmed his death, Baturin's mother continues to hope he may still be alive.

Baturin, along with conscripts Mykyta Molochkovsky and Mykyta Borisov, had been stationed at military unit 71435 in Lagunnoye, Sakhalin, after their conscription. In April 2024, suspicious payments of \$2,890 were deposited into their accounts. This prompted the soldiers to file lawsuits, alleging that their signatures had been forged on two-year contracts.

Investigations revealed that in December 2023, commanders of Russian unit 71435, including acting Lieutenant Colonel Misevich, had falsified "voluntary" contracts for multiple conscripts. Official verification of the forgery by a forensic institute came only after the deaths of all three soldiers.

Molochkovsky died in August 2024, and Borisov reportedly died earlier that year. Molochkovsky's mother received confirmation of the forgery in December 2024.

Earlier, a 19-year-old Russian conscript from Tatarstan, Artem Antonov, was reportedly shot dead by his superior at the Illinsky training range in Primorsky Krai, Russia, after refusing to sign a military contract and deploy near Ukraine's border.

Antonov's family alleged he had faced mistreatment, including beatings and denial of medical care, before his death, which officials controversially described as a sacrifice for his homeland. » Source: United 24 Media, Russian Conscripts Who Sued the Ministry of Defense Over Forged Contracts Killed in Combat, 16 décembre 2024: <https://united24media.com/latest-news/russian-conscripts-who-sued-the-ministry-of-defense-over-forged-contracts-killed-in-combat-4477>

USDOS, 23 avril 2024:

« Failure to submit to conscription into Russia's armed forces was also used as a basis for unjust detentions. Since 2015 Russia conducted annual spring and fall conscriptions in Crimea, and failure to comply was punishable by criminal penalty. As of September 30, the Crimean Tatar Resource Center estimated more than 60,000 Crimean residents had been conscripted to service in Russia's forces since the beginning of 2014. As of September 30, the Crimean Tatar Resource Center documented 10 criminal and 600 administrative cases brought against Crimean residents for evading military service in Russia's armed forces. On September 29, Russian Federation President Putin signed a decree to conscript 130,000 personnel into the Russian armed forces from October to December, with conscription taking place in all occupied areas of Ukraine. The HRMMU noted in an October report that conscription of protected persons was a grave breach of article 147 of Geneva Convention IV. » Source: US Department of State (USDOS), 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Ukraine — Russia-occupied Areas, 23 avril 2024 : <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2107675.html>

En tant que principale organisation d'aide aux personnes réfugiées en Suisse et faîtière des œuvres d'entraide et des organisations actives dans les domaines de l'exil et de l'asile, l'Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés (OSAR) s'engage pour une Suisse qui accueille les personnes réfugiées, les protège efficacement, respecte leurs droits fondamentaux et humains, favorise leur participation dans la société et les traite avec respect et ouverture. Dans sa fonction, l'OSAR renforce et défend les intérêts et les droits des personnes bénéficiant d'une protection et favorise la compréhension de leurs conditions de vie. Grâce à son expertise avérée, elle marque le discours public et exerce une influence sur les conditions sociales et politiques.

D'autres publications de l'OSAR sont disponibles sur le site www.osar.ch/publications. La newsletter de l'OSAR, qui paraît régulièrement, vous informe des nouvelles publications. Inscription à l'adresse www.osar.ch/newsletter.