

Russian Lawmakers Approve Long Jail Terms for Military Surrender, Refusal to Serve

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Russian lawmakers [passed](#) sweeping legislation Tuesday introducing jail terms of up to 15 years for wartime acts, including surrendering, as the country's forces face major battlefield setbacks nearly seven months after invading Ukraine.

Voluntary surrender and looting are punished by 10 and 15 years in prison, respectively, with "mobilization, martial law and wartime" listed as aggravating circumstances.

Desertion during mobilization or wartime will be punished by up to 10 years, according to the bill authored by members of all parties represented in parliament.

Conscientious objectors are punished by up to three years in prison during wartime.

The bill introduces the concepts of "mobilization, martial law and wartime" previously not mentioned in the Russian Criminal Code, according to human rights lawyer Pavel Chikov, who

first [reported](#) on the draft Duma bill.

Observers speculate that its passage paves the way for general mobilization amid Russia's struggles to replenish its depleting troops in Ukraine.

Soldiers who refuse service can be jailed even without martial law, military lawyer Maxim Grebenyuk [told](#) the independent news website Vyorstka, pointing to language in the legislation that punishes soldiers during an "armed conflict."

The State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, voted unanimously in favor of the bill, Chikov said.

Russia's upper house of parliament, the Federation Council, is expected to pass the draft bill on Wednesday, according to state media.

The wartime jail terms will then come into force the day President Vladimir Putin signs the bill into law.

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