The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Estonia Nabs Russian Reservist Fleeing Draft on Paddle Board

September 27, 2022

Baltic Times

Estonian border guards have caught a Russian man fleeing President Vladimir Putin's military call-up on a SUP board, media in the Baltic EU member reported Tuesday.

Authorities launched a search operation on the border with northwestern Russia after spotting the 38-year-old paddle boarding across the Narva River around midnight Monday, according to the ERR broadcaster.

"Several additional patrols including a dog patrol were involved, and the area was cordoned off," ERR reported.

The man was detained at a nearby bus stop hours later and eventually fined and deported. The broadcaster declined to identify the deported man.

Related article: Poland, Baltics Enact EU Visa Ban for Russians

“In this case, it was an illegal border crossing done out of fear of mobilization in the neighboring country,” said Eerik Purgel, who heads the border and migration control service in Estonia’s northeastern region bordering Russia.

Purgel said Estonia, which this month joined its two Baltic neighbors and Poland in banning most Russian travelers, has not seen any increase in migrant crossings recently.

Estonia’s police and border guard agency recorded a decrease from 11,500 crossings per week in late August to 7,500 crossings last week, its head Egert Belitšev said Monday.

More Russians were also denied entry into Estonia over the same period, he added.

Putin’s announcement of a “partial” mobilization from an estimated pool of 25 million Russian reservists last week has sparked an exodus of military-age Russians.

Media reports citing border agents said more than a quarter million have fled the country in less than one week, with most heading for countries where Russian citizens do not need a visa.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/09/27/estonia-nabs-russian-reservist-fleeing-draft-on-paddle-board-a78903