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Russia's Military Mobilization Targets the Homeless, Poor – Reports

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Mobilized men on a bus in Moscow. **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

Russian authorities are mobilizing men from the country's most vulnerable groups to send to the front in Ukraine, the independent Mediazona news website reported Tuesday.

In Moscow, security officers have taken men to military enlistment centers from charity centers for the homeless and needy as well as hostels where labor migrants live, Mediazona reported.

The Food Not Bombs group, which hands out food to Moscow's homeless community, told Mediazona that it has seen dozens of homeless men taken off the street and brought to military enlistment offices in the weeks since President Vladimir Putin declared a "partial" mobilization.

"The police come here without anyone asking. They see a queue of people waiting for food — and then they grab them by the scruff of the neck, against their will," the head of the Salvation Hangar, an Orthodox Christian organization that helps the homeless, told

Mediazona.

The men are then loaded onto buses and transported to military enlistment offices.

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"A 60-year-old man was taken away, then he was released and came back. He told me that they were taken to the military commissariat, where many people who had been called up for war were standing in line. He was told that he didn't fit the age criteria and that they only take men up to 45 years old," a representative of Food Not Bombs told Mediazona.

The news website also reported that authorities have come to hostels commonly used as residences by "couriers, labor migrants, taxi drivers, small-scale managers and vendors" to recruit men for Russia's ongoing invasion.

One guest of the Travel Inn hostel in Moscow told Mediazona that on Oct. 8, police cordoned off the area around the hostel and started searching the rooms and asking for guests' documents.

"Those who were served draft papers were ordered to come with their things the next day at 9:00 and their passports were confiscated. Those who weren't handed draft papers were released, " the eyewitness claimed.

Hundreds of thousands of men have fled Russia since Putin declared the "partial" mobilization on Sept. 21.

Numerous reports have said that the mobilization effort has disproportionately targeted men from poorer regions, ethnic minorities and disenfranchised backgrounds.

"That's why they came to the Hangar," the head of the Salvation Hangar said. "They know that no one will stand up for the homeless."

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