The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Activist Takes Refuge From Mobilization in Remote Forest

October 24, 2022



Illustrative photo **Denys Nevozhai / unsplash**

A Russian IT professional and anti-war activist has come up with an unusual way to avoid being drafted by the military, setting up camp in a remote forest in southern Russia where he keeps the public updated about his life in the wilderness, the independent news website Mediazona reported Saturday.

Adam Kalinin, whose name was changed by the outlet to protect his identity, said he opposed Russia's invasion of Ukraine but had opted to remain in the country despite President Vladimir Putin's announcement of a "partial" mobilization on Sept. 21.

"Why should I have to leave my homeland?" Kalinin asked Mediazona, adding that his family, friends and colleagues all supported his decision.

Kalinin, a hiking enthusiast and a self-described introvert, set up camp in an unnamed region of southern Russia after spending a week making preparations for life off the grid, including the addition of solar panels to his existing set of survival tools.

To store food, Kalinin installed a container stocked with essential supplies about an hour's walk from his camp.

"I go there from time to time as if to a real store," he told Mediazona.

For drinking water, he collects rainwater in a plastic-lined 20-liter bucket, he said in a video posted on Telegram.

Related article: 'I Don't Want to Be Cannon Fodder': Panic and Fear as Russia Begins Mobilization

In fact, Kalinin has set up two tents in the woods: one without internet access where he sleeps, and one with a satellite dish perched on the branch of a nearby tree for his eight-hour workday.

"The reason I have them separated is because [one] is a nice place where there's no draft, there's sunshine, there's a clearing," he said. "In 'the office,' the weather's not as nice, it gets pretty nasty if the wind blows, but it has the internet."

Kalinin describes his living conditions as "super eco-friendly," sharing a photograph of his makeshift tree stump chair and describing how he digs pits to use the toilet. Kalinin admits that he misses having a shower — he uses wet wipes instead — and access to a washing machine.

Having not seen a single person – let alone any large animals – in nearly a month of living in the forest, Kalinin said he is not afraid of getting caught, and also expressed confidence hat his living conditions were far better than those being faced by mobilized Russians during their deployment.

Kalinin said that while he had initially planned to live in the woods for no more than a month, he was now considering staying for the winter, even though he missed his wife and friends.

Kalinin credited his wife, who plans to visit him next week, for helping him escape the draft. "Without her, I wouldn't have accomplished half of what I imagined," he wrote.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/10/24/russian-activist-takes-refuge-from-mobilization-in-remote-forest-a79173