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Moscow Buses Take Down Army Recruitment Ads Targeting Central Asian Nationals

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Moskva News Agency

Moscow transportation authorities have removed city bus ads recruiting Central Asian nationals into the Russian military with promises of expedited citizenship, media reported Sunday.

Photos showing an Uzbek-language recruitment message on board a Moscow bus went viral last week.

“If you join the Russian Armed Forces under contract, you can easily obtain Russian citizenship in line with a Russian presidential decree,” the text read.

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Moscow’s bus operating network Mosgostrans said the message was part of its two-month

campaign tailored for citizens of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, according to the RBC news website.

The ads had been requested by and strategically placed on buses bound for the Sakharovo migration center, where Mayor Sergei Sobyanin opened a military recruitment site for foreigners in September.

Embed:

Later that month, President Vladimir Putin signed legislation simplifying citizenships for foreigners who complete a one-year contract with the Russian military.

Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan authorities have warned their citizens that fighting for the Russian army in Ukraine would subject them to criminal prosecution at home.

Many nationals of Central Asian states, Moscow's traditional allies, move to Russia for work. They make up a significant share of foreigners granted Russian passports.

Widespread reports of Central Asian nationals living in Russia being pressured into joining Russian forces for deployment in Ukraine have surfaced in the months since Moscow invaded its neighbor.

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