

Russian Troops Claim Commander Threatened 'Desertion' Case After Retreat

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Artyom Geodakyan / TASS

Prosecutors in the Yaroslavl region are reviewing claims made by mobilized Russian soldiers in Ukraine that their superiors ordered them to retreat and then later threatened them with criminal prosecution for desertion, local media [reported](#) on Wednesday.

In a video address shared with the pro-war ProGorod news website, around two dozen men in military fatigues said their company commander had ordered a retreat when their unit came under mortar and tank fire, despite the troops having damaged weapons and lacking any cover.

“Now they want to accuse us of desertion because the company commander says he didn’t give the order,” one of the soldiers said.

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Authorities in central Russia's Yaroslavl region told ProGorod they had passed the incident on to the military prosecutor's office.

"An investigation is being conducted," the regional administration was quoted as saying.

The commander in question, who has not been identified, has apparently made no comment on the soldiers' allegations.

ProGorod, which said it had withheld details that could be used to identify the unit for security reasons, said it had received the video from the wives of the mobilized soldiers. The wives [reportedly](#) expressed concern that they could face criminal charges under Russia's wartime censorship laws.

President Vladimir Putin, who ordered troops into Ukraine in February, has formed a task force specifically to deal with issues raised by Russia's mobilization drive, following his announcement of a military draft in September to bolster the Russian invasion force in Ukraine.

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