The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Military Crimes Surge Nearly Threefold in 2022

January 26, 2023



Mobilized servicemen train at a training ground of Russia's Southern Military District. **Dmitry Rogulin / TASS**

Russian soldiers were nearly three times more likely to be accused of crimes against military service including desertion and insubordination in 2022 than the previous year, according to Prosecutor General's Office data.

Courts issued 2,835 guilty verdicts for crimes against military service out of 3,047 cases opened in 2022, the RBC news website reported Wednesday, citing lawyer Maxim Grebenyukt.

That compares to 1,089 convictions and 1,514 overall cases in the same category reported in 2021.

Crimes related to "failure to obey orders" and "unauthorized abandonment of the unit" saw the highest year-on-year increases, according to Grebenyuk, who runs the Military Ombudsman online community.

The Prosecutor General's Office statistics do not specify the numbers for each specific crime under the Criminal Code article on "crimes against military service," which is made up of 22 different crimes, Grebenyuk said.

Related article: Russia Introduces Harsh Punishments for Wartime Desertion, Refusal to Serve

In addition, the number of sabotage cases (Article 281 of the Criminal Code) rose sharply to 23, compared to one such case opened in 2021 and zero in 2020 and 2019.

Authorities opened 444 cases related to "non-statutory relations," or hazing, in 2022, or two more than the previous year.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, initially fought using contract soldiers, was expanded to include civilian reservists when the Kremlin launched a "partial" mobilization on Sept. 21.

The mobilization campaign, plagued with disorganization and a widespread lack of training, equipment and basic supplies for draftees, saw numerous mobilized soldiers publicly condemn their treatment.

Shortly after declaring the mobilization, Russia passed legislation that toughens penalties for abandoning one's military unit, failing to report for duty on time, going AWOL, damage to or destruction of military equipment, voluntary surrender and other violations.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/01/26/russian-military-crimes-surge-nearly-threefold-in-2022-a80050