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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Recruits Jailed for 3 Years for Refusing to Fight in Ukraine

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Video grab

Two Russian conscripts who made headlines last year for refusing to fight in Ukraine during a lineup have been sentenced to three years in prison, the Kommersant business daily reported Thursday, citing sources familiar with the case.

Drafted as part of President Vladimir Putin's mobilization drive last fall, Yury Degtyarev and Alexei Selivanov were among the first recruits to be detained for refusing service during mobilization.

A video of their demonstrative arrest during a lineup in front of their fellow soldiers at a military base in Belgorod was widely shared online in November.

Embed:

Degtyarev and Selivanov were both sentenced to three years in a penal colony by the Kursk

Garrison Military Court on Dec. 22, having been found guilty of refusing to comply with a unit commander's orders to supply their comrades with personal armor and weapons.

One of the soldiers unsuccessfully appealed his sentence, Kommersant said, though it didn't say which of the pair had done so.

Degtyarev and Selivanov both pleaded guilty to the charges and signaled their readiness to return to active duty.

Russia's military courts have issued convictions in more than half of the 708 criminal cases opened against conscripts, according to the independent Mediazona news website.

Russian lawmakers passed sweeping legislation introducing jail terms of up to 15 years for acts including desertion and conscientious objection days ahead of Putin's announcement of a "partial" mobilization in September.

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