

# Russia Sentences 8 Mobilized Soldiers to Prison for Deserting in Ukraine

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Vladimir Novikov, Press Service of the Mayor and Government of Moscow / Moskva News Agency

A Russian military court has sentenced eight mobilized soldiers to prison terms of up to seven years for deserting their unit in eastern Ukraine, the independent Mediazona news website [reported](#) Tuesday, citing their lawyer.

The soldiers had been sent to a field camp in the Moscow-occupied region of Luhansk after being drafted in September as part of the Kremlin's "partial" military mobilization for the war, Mediazona said.

The soldiers, who complained of a lack of equipment and provisions, had been set to go to the front on Dec. 24, but fled the camp in order to "save [their] life and health," lawyer Yevgeny Saveskul told Mediazona.

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According to Mediazona, they then went to the Moscow region town of Podolsk and handed over the weapons issued to them during their military service to the police.

A military court in the Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad found all seven men guilty of desertion committed by an organized group and failure to comply with orders during a period of mobilization or armed conflict, Mediazona reported.

Junior sergeant Yevgeny Kravchenko and private Alexander Bogachenko were sentenced to seven years in prison; sailor Alexander Babeshko and private Nikolai Kolmachev to six years; and mobilized reservists Dmitry Medvedev, Alexander Eliseev, Igor Medvedev and Denis Balakhin to six-and-a-half years.

Russia [introduced](#) lengthy jail terms for wartime acts including desertion and "voluntary" surrender shortly after the start of its mobilization campaign last year.

According to the law, desertion during a period of mobilization or wartime is punishable by up to 10 years in prison, while conscientious objectors face a sentence of up to three years.

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