

Chechens Pressured By Authorities to Fight in Ukraine – Rights Group

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Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov takes a ride on an upgraded T-72 tank. **Press Service of the Head of the Chechen Republic / TASS**

Authorities in Russia's North Caucasus republic of Chechnya have pressured Chechens to fight in Ukraine using money and force since the start of the war, according to a [report](#) published Thursday by the SK SOS human rights organization.

"The invasion of Ukraine was another opportunity for [Chechen leader] Ramzan Kadyrov to curry favor with Vladimir Putin and show his influence in Chechnya," SK SOS wrote.

But despite Kadyrov's efforts to rally support for the war in his region, "in reality, a year and a half of the war has looked completely different for Chechnya: ridiculous propaganda, hunting for taxi drivers, missing passports, crowds of boastful marauders in Grozny, and fabulous fees for signing up for mercenaries," the group continued.

Chechen security forces allegedly keep a database of individuals "who have been detained in the past for drugs, alcohol, making unflattering statements about officials or being LGBT."

Since the start of the war, security forces have threatened to send these people or their relatives to the frontline, saying they will be sent to prison if they refuse to serve, the report said.

Individuals who were illegally held in notorious secret prisons in Chechnya because they were LGBT or opposed the Chechen leadership were also recruited to join the military, the report said.

About 45 of approximately 70 people who were illegally held in one such prison were sent to fight in Ukraine during the Kremlin's "partial" mobilization campaign in the fall of 2022, SK SOS said.

Related article: [Putin Makes Chechnya's Kadyrov an Army General](#)

Chechen police also raided establishments where potential conscripts could be found, including cafes, gaming clubs, gyms and taxi companies, following the launch of the "partial" mobilization, the report said.

Chechens were also promised monthly payments much higher than those of Russian servicemen elsewhere, with payments of up to 500,000 rubles (\$6,100) or even 700,00 rubles (\$8,500) per month compared to the roughly 200,000 rubles (\$2,438) paid to Russian contract soldiers.

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov said in September that he had [exempted](#) his region from the nationwide military call-up, claiming that Chechnya had already deployed 20,000 troops by that time.

"The republic of Chechnya over-fulfilled its conscription plan by 254%... even before the announcement of a partial mobilization," he wrote on his Telegram channel at the time.

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