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Russia's Budget Revenue from Prisoner Labor Doubles from 2016-2022

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Men's colony in the Krasnodar region. **Roman Sokolov / TASS**

Russia's federal budget revenue from convict labor has more than doubled from 2016-2022, The Moscow Times' Russian service reported Friday, citing Finance Ministry data.

In 2022, the federal budget received 19.1 billion rubles ($192.4 million) from forced labor performed by convicts for state and private companies, compared to 8.8 billion rubles ($89.4 million) in 2016, according to MT's Russian service.

In the first five months of 2023, the federal budget has already received 7.6 billion rubles ($77.5 million) from using convict labor.

Russia reintroduced compulsory labor as a form of criminal punishment in 2017.

More than 26,000 inmates in the country's prisons are performing forced labor for 1,700 commercial organizations, MT Russian reported, citing Russia's Federal Penitentiary Service (FSIN).

Companies such as leading e-commerce company Ozon, Russian Railways, the truck manufacturer KAMAZ and Russia's largest tank manufacturer Uralvagonzavod use inmates' labor.

The British Defense Ministry said in January that "the Russian defense manufacturing sector is highly likely resorting to using convict labor in an effort to meet wartime production demands."

"The prison population provides a unique human resource to Russian leaders to utilize in support of the 'special military operation' while willing volunteers remain in short supply," the ministry said in a statement.

The federal budget deficit has also soared since the start of the war in Ukraine, with the country spending more in the first half of 2023 than originally targeted for the entire year.

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