

Russian Soldier Gets 13 Years in Penal Colony for Desertion

By [AFP](#)

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Maxim Kochetkov. **Social Media**

Russia on Friday sentenced a soldier to 13 years in a "maximum security" penal colony for deserting his unit to avoid fighting in Ukraine.

Moscow has handed severe punishments for desertion during mobilization — which triggered a wave of emigration last year — and to soldiers who refused to go into battle.

A military tribunal in the Far East island of Sakhalin said the soldier, Maxim Kochetkov, deserted his unit "to avoid being sent to the special military operation" in Ukraine.

He was arrested in July on the island of Sakhalin by police.

Kochetkov was handed nine years for desertion but had his sentence extended due to criminal proceedings for leaving his unit without permission in February last year.

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The court said he will serve the 13 years in a "maximum-security correctional colony."

President Vladimir Putin had ordered the mobilization of 300,000 men to refill Moscow's ranks in Ukraine in September last year.

Separately, a Moscow-installed court in occupied Donetsk in eastern Ukraine sentenced a Ukrainian prisoner of war from the Azov regiment to 26 years in prison, Russian state media reported.

The Azov regiment held the defense of Ukraine's port city of Mariupol before it fell to Russian forces last Spring

The court accused Ukrainian soldier Ruslan Kolodyazhny of killing two civilians in Mariupol in April 2022, according to the RIA Novosti news agency.

The news agency quoted a court statement saying the soldier would serve the sentence in a "maximum security correctional facility."

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