

Record Number of Russian Soldiers Convicted of Felonies in 2023 – Mediazona

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Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency

Russian courts have convicted a record number of soldiers on charges of sexual violence, murder and other felonies in the first half of 2023, the independent news website Mediazona [reported](#), citing Supreme Court data.

The courts issued 32 murder convictions against Russian soldiers from January to June 2023.

By comparison, fewer than 20 convictions were made during the same periods of 2020, 2021 and 2022, according to Mediazona.

Another 46 Russian soldiers were convicted of deliberate infliction of grave injury. In past years, the courts issued an average of 26 convictions for the same crime every six months.

There were 22 sexual violence convictions of Russian soldiers, compared with between six and 10 in past years.

At least 17 of the 22 sexual violence crimes were committed against minors, said Mediazona.

Related article: [Murders, Drugs and Brawls: Russia's Pardoned Ex-Convicts Return Home After Fighting in Ukraine](#)

The outlet linked the spike to the overall increase in the number of Russian soldiers, which was [estimated](#) at 740,000–780,000 in early 2022 but has since been expanded with 300,000 mobilized reservists and 350,000 volunteers for the war in Ukraine.

Mediazona added that the overall number of convictions, which includes both civilian and military defendants, has dipped slightly this year.

Russia's Defense Ministry and the Wagner mercenary group recruited heavily from Russian prisons to bolster their manpower in Ukraine, promising convicts a pardon in exchange for military service.

A number of these pardoned convicts have been reported to have committed new crimes after returning from Ukraine.

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