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Russia Says Recruited 385K Soldiers This Year

By AFP

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The fall draft in the Novosibirsk region. **Kirill Kukhmar / TASS**

Russia's Armed Forces have recruited 385,000 people so far this year, officials said Wednesday, as Moscow needs masses of soldiers for its Ukraine offensive.

Russia does not say how many troops it has lost during the 20-month offensive, but independent estimates put the numbers well into the tens of thousands.

Moscow has launched an aggressive recruitment campaign, offering huge salaries and welfare programs in a bid to recruit soldiers for its assault.

"The rate of recruitment for contracted military service has increased significantly. More than 1,600 people are signing a contract with the Armed Forces every day," Russia's former leader Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chair of the nation's Security Council, said in a video published on social media.

Amid a shortage of manpower, Russia drafted more than 300,000 reservists in a controversial "partial mobilization" drive last year.

Speculation about a new round of forced call-ups has remained rife as the conflict in eastern Ukraine approaches a winter stalemate and losses continue to mount.

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