

Kremlin Orders Regions to Recruit Marginalized Groups for Military Service – IStories

November 02, 2023



Fresh conscripts in the Russian army. **Vladimir Smirnov / TASS**

The Kremlin has ordered regional officials to file weekly reports on the recruitment of marginalized people in Russia for its war in Ukraine, the investigative news website [IStories reported](#) Thursday, citing an official letter it obtained.

The letter, which is dated Oct. 3, lists the office of the Presidential Envoy to Russia's Central Federal District as the author and states that military recruitment orders have been in place since March 1, 2023.

IStories notes that an attached document identifies some 22 disadvantaged categories of Russians who are targeted for contract-based recruitment into the military.

Additional instructions order regional officials to track the number of people who are approached and agree to sign military contracts on a weekly basis.

It was not immediately possible to independently verify the authenticity of the letter, and the presidential envoy's office did not respond to IStories' request for comment.

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Priority targets for war recruitment are reportedly given to migrants and recently naturalized citizens, as well as debtors and the unemployed.

“It feels like they're getting rid of a marginalized layer of society,” an anonymous recruitment officer in one of Russia's regions was quoted as saying by IStories.

“They don't care at all about the quality of the army,” the officer added. “They don't care what will happen to [the recruits'] families after they're deployed.”

The recruitment letter reveals that the Russian military still struggles to motivate people to voluntarily sign up for its war in Ukraine, said Sergei Krivenko, who heads the NGO “Citizen, Army & the Law.”

“Signing a contract is still voluntary, but it's possible to persuade, set conditions or make life unbearable,” Krivenko told IStories.

“If everything was so good and people were signing contracts themselves, we wouldn't need all these tricks and efforts by regional authorities, or monitor and kick those regional authorities.”

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