

'Alcoholics and Criminals' Dominate Russian Army Recruits, Says Siberian City MP

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Prisoners, homeless people and other socially disadvantaged individuals made up the majority of military recruits in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk over the past year, a local assemblyman has said.

“Over the last year our contract soldiers were mostly alcoholics, homeless people, derelicts, prisoners and others,” the local news website ngs24.ru [quoted](#) Krasnoyarsk city council member Vyacheslav Dyukov as saying at a televised session Wednesday.

Dyukov is a [member](#) of the ruling, pro-Kremlin United Russia party, which unanimously backs President Vladimir Putin’s policy initiatives including his 2022 decision to invade Ukraine.

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Dyukov's characterization of Russian servicemen came during discussions on recruitment numbers with the head of one of Krasnoyarsk's seven municipal districts, Yury Savchuk.

Savchuk argued that his Zheleznodorozhny district, which boasts the [lowest](#) crime rates in Krasnoyarsk, has fulfilled Moscow's [2024 contract soldier recruitment plan](#) so far despite the mayor's claims otherwise.

Russia is pushing a military recruitment drive in a bid to replenish its troop numbers in Ukraine, where its forces have been fighting for nearly two years.

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu boasted in December that 490,000 contract servicemen and volunteers had been enlisted since the beginning of 2023. Around 387,000 of them are [thought](#) to be contract soldiers.

Federal authorities expect to find approximately 400,000 more people to sign army contracts in 2024, government sources [told](#) independent journalist Farida Rustamova.

This year's recruitment plan is expected to be more challenging than the last because the military has exhausted its pool of potential recruits, the sources said in December.

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