

Indian Men 'Tricked' Into Fighting in Ukraine Appeal for Help

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The group of Indian men who called on their government to help secure their release. **Social media**

A group of men from northern India who claim to have been tricked into fighting for Russia in its war on Ukraine are now calling on their government to help secure their release, Indian media [reported](#) Wednesday.

In a video published by the broadcaster NDTV, seven men can be seen standing in a dingy room and wearing green military fatigues similar to those worn by soldiers in the Russian military.

According to the news outlet, the men are believed to have left for Russia on Dec. 27 to celebrate the New Year holiday, after which they tried to visit neighboring Belarus.

“A [tour] agent offered to take us to Belarus... we were not aware we needed a visa. When we went to Belarus [without a visa] the agent asked us for more money and then abandoned us,” the man recording the video was quoted as saying by NDTV, which identified him as Harsh, 19.

Related article: [India Says Around 20 Citizens 'Stuck' in Russian Army](#)

“The police caught us and handed us over to Russian authorities, who made us sign documents,” he said. “Now they [Russia] are forcing us to fight in the war against Ukraine.”

When contacted by NDTV, Harsh’s family said he had also traveled to Russia in search of work abroad.

“He told us they had been caught by Russian soldiers who threatened him with 10 years of jail and recruited him. He said he was forced to do military training,” his mother was quoted as saying.

“I want the government to bring my son safely home,” she said.

Last week, India’s Foreign Ministry [said](#) it was working to secure the release of around 20 of its citizens who were “stuck” in the Russian military.

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Several Indian recruits told AFP in February that they had been lured into joining Moscow’s Armed Forces by promises of high salaries and Russian citizenship.

Neither India nor Moscow has explicitly confirmed whether the Indian nationals recruited by the Russian military were deployed to fight on the front line in Ukraine.

Russia’s military is known to recruit foreign nationals from Central Asian countries, but recent media reports have revealed that Moscow's enlistment efforts are also [targeting](#) citizens of India, Cuba and Nepal, among others.

AFP contributed reporting.

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