

India Raids Network Sending Citizens to Fight for Russia

By [AFP](#)

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Indian authorities said they have detained members of a "trafficking" network sending citizens of the country to fight for the Russian army in Ukraine after raiding several travel agents.

At least two Indian citizens fighting as soldiers in Russia's armed forces have been killed in the war, with several recruits telling AFP they were shipped to the front lines under false pretenses.

Investigators from India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted raids across 13 locations on Thursday and detained "certain suspects" for questioning, according to a statement issued late that evening.

"These traffickers have been operating as an organized network and were luring Indian

nationals through social media channels like YouTube... and also through their local contacts [and] agents for highly paid jobs in Russia," the statement said.

"Trafficked Indian Nationals were trained in combat roles and deployed at front bases in the Russia-Ukraine war zone against their wishes," it continued.

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The CBI said it had established "around 35 instances" of Indians being sent to Russia but added it was working to identify more potential victims.

India's Foreign Ministry had earlier said it was working to secure the release of around 20 Indian nationals who were "stuck" in the Russian army.

The CBI named four suspects in the network, including Dubai-based recruitment agent Faisal Khan, who had advertised Russian army jobs on his social media channel Baba Vlogs.

Khan told AFP last month that he had helped facilitate the travel of 16 Indian citizens to Russia late last year for what he said were support roles in the army.

He said he had been "taken aback" when recruits were issued weapons, and "decided to put a stop to the recruitment process."

Several Indian recruits told AFP in February that they were lured into joining up by promises of high salaries and Russian passports before being shipped to the front lines.

The soldiers who spoke with AFP said they had been promised non-combatant roles but were trained to use Kalashnikov assault rifles and other weapons before being sent to Ukraine.

India is a longstanding ally of Russia and has shied away from explicit condemnation of Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

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