

# Russian Military Says Recruited 100K Contract Soldiers Since Start of 2024

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Contract soldiers being sent off for military duty. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's Defense Ministry [said](#) Wednesday that more than 100,000 people have signed up to fight as contract soldiers in the war against Ukraine so far this year.

“Over the past week and a half, recruitment points have seen a significant increase in the number of people interested in signing contracts with the Russian Defense Ministry in order to take part in the special military operation,” the ministry said in a statement, using the Kremlin’s preferred term for its full-scale invasion.

It added that “around 16,000 citizens” had signed military contracts over the past 10 days alone, with “most candidates” saying they were motivated to “avenge those killed” in the Crocus City Hall attack late last month.

Top Russian officials have accused Ukraine and its Western allies of being partly responsible for the March 22 attack outside of Moscow, which claimed the lives of more than 140 people and left hundreds more wounded. Islamic State affiliate ISIS-K has said it was responsible for

the massacre, while Kyiv and the West have denied any involvement.

**Related article:** [How Russian Officials Plan to Recruit 400K New Contract Soldiers in 2024](#)

Since the spring of 2023, Russia's Armed Forces have carried out a mass campaign to promote contract service. Experts describe the drive as an attempt to address the military's growing manpower shortage in Ukraine while also trying to avoid any public backlash that would likely arise from a new round of mobilization.

The Kremlin [reportedly sought](#) to recruit 400,000 soldiers from across Russia in 2023, and according to some [reports](#), citing anonymous sources, Russian officials expect to recruit a similar number of contract soldiers this year.

In October, former president Dmitry Medvedev said 305,000 men had signed military contracts and 80,000 had enlisted as volunteer fighters.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said last year that the military plans to recruit 745,000 contract soldiers in 2024.

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