

# Record Number of Russian Soldiers Convicted of Murder in 2023 – Data

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**Arthur Novosiltsev / Moskva News Agency**

A record number of Russian soldiers were convicted of murder in 2023, the independent Mediazona news website [reported](#) Wednesday, citing Supreme Court data.

Russian courts sentenced 116 contract soldiers and conscripts for premeditated murder last year, a dramatic increase from the 13 soldiers convicted in 2022 and 21 in 2021, according to the data.

Mediazona noted that the convictions do not include cases of mishandling weapons or other military equipment.

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Russian courts also handed down a [record](#) number of convictions for espionage, state treason and disclosure of state secrets since at least 2010, according to the same 2023 Supreme Court

data analyzed by another independent outlet, Vyorstka.

Nine people were sentenced for espionage, [39 for treason](#) and 73 for disclosing state secrets, according to the data.

The number of convictions has risen from previous years.

The increases came as Russia's invasion of Ukraine entered its third year in February 2024.

Throughout 2022 and 2023, Russia's Defense Ministry and the Wagner mercenary group recruited heavily from Russian prisons to bolster their manpower in Ukraine, promising to pardon convicts in exchange for military service.

The practice has since been gradually [phased out](#) in favor of conditional release for the duration of the war, according to media reports.

In March 2024, President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) into law the practice of allowing future suspected or convicted criminals to join the military.

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