

Relatives of Mobilized Russian Soldiers Protest Outside Defense Ministry

By [AFP](#)

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t.me/PYTY_DOMOY

A group of women staged a rare protest outside the Russian Defense Ministry building in Moscow on Monday, demanding the return of their loved ones drafted to fight in Ukraine and a meeting with new Defense Minister Andrei Belousov.

Around 15 women, some with small children, gathered outside the building holding up hand-written placards saying "Bring my mobilized husband home" and posting images of themselves on social media.

The protest took place after Russia branded the organization Put Domoy (The Way Home) — a movement to bring back men mobilized in the wake of a September 2022 draft — a "foreign agent" last week.

The women, who wished to remain anonymous, told AFP they were not part of Put Domoy and

were relatives of men fighting in Ukraine.

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They held the protest without inviting the media after journalists were arrested at previous protests organized by Put Domoy.

"We are asking you to call the defense minister," the women said, getting down on their knees in front of a policeman who asked them to put down their placards.

One woman pointed to her toddler daughter and said: "Do you see her? I gave birth and three months later they took my husband."

Several women came with young children in buggies and one held a small baby in her arms.

They held up a banner that read "Andrei Removich Belousov, talk to us!"

One of the women, who identified herself as Paulina, later posted a video, saying: "We are taking down our placards because we were promised that a representative of the defense minister will come to us."

Russia had previously allowed the women to stage the protests in central Moscow, seemingly unwilling to antagonize relatives of men fighting in Ukraine.

But its branding of Put Domoy as a "foreign agent" — a label it uses to stigmatize critics of the Kremlin — indicated a likely change in tactic by authorities.

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