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Russia Sent 10K Naturalized Citizens to War in Ukraine, Top Investigator Says

June 27, 2024



Alexander Bastrykin. **Ruslan Shamukov / Roscongress Photobank**

A senior federal law enforcement official said Thursday that Russia has sent 10,000 recently naturalized citizens to fight in Ukraine amid Moscow's manpower shortage.

Male migrants who receive Russian citizenship are required by law to register with the Russian military and can be called up to serve in the army during mobilization.

"We've begun to implement constitutional and legal provisions [and] caught more than 30,000 of those who received citizenship but were unwilling to register with the military," said Alexander Bastrykin, who heads Russia's Investigative Committee.

"Approximately 10,000 of them have been sent to the area of the special military operation," he said at a law forum in St. Petersburg, using the Kremlin's preferred term for its invasion of Ukraine.

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Bastrykin described military registration and deployment as a "trick that led migrants to slowly begin leaving Russia."

A video of the law forum session, which was dedicated to migration policy, was broadcast live and the Ostorozhno Novosti Telegram news channel shared Bastrykin's remarks.

The official said the 10,000 naturalized citizens sent to Ukraine "dig trenches and build fortifications," suggesting that they have not been deployed on combat missions.

Bastrykin added that 3 million migrants had arrived in Moscow and St. Petersburg alone in the first four months of 2024 and called for tighter laws to limit those figures.

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