

# Russia's Army Recruits Are Increasingly Older, Less Capable Men – Vyorstka

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Sending contractors to Russian units of the Armed Forces. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

The Russian military is seeing an influx of older contract soldiers who are largely seen as detrimental to its war effort in Ukraine, the investigative news outlet Vyorstka [reported](#) Wednesday, citing anonymous military and parliamentary sources.

Volunteer fighters aged 45 and over now make up half of new recruits in Moscow, a senior Mayor's Office source was cited as saying. The average age of recruits has risen from 40 at the start of the year to about 50, said another Moscow Mayor's Office source.

“They’re all sick,” a Russian soldier fighting in Ukraine was quoted as saying of these troops. “Their legs hurt, their heads hurt, and they’re slow.”

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Russia's Armed Forces have been carrying out a mass campaign to promote contract service

since the spring of 2023.

In recent months, regional and federal authorities have offered increasing financial and other incentives to bolster its ranks in Ukraine without turning to a new round of politically risky mobilization.

Vyorstka's report on the country's aging manpower is in part corroborated by the BBC's Russian service and the independent news website Mediazona's research into Russia's verified military death toll.

The outlets identified 2,475 volunteer soldiers over 45 years old who died in Ukraine so far this year, a figure that's half of Russia's overall death toll in 2024.

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