

Russian Courts Processed Record 20K Cases of Missing or Dead Persons in 2024 – Mediazona

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Russian servicemen on the front line in Ukraine. **Alexander Reka / TASS**

Russian courts received a record 20,040 petitions to declare individuals missing or dead last year, the independent news website Mediazona [reported](#) Monday, citing court documents.

The figure is more than double the approximate 8,600 court filings in 2023, which Mediazona said was in line with annual numbers before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Journalists linked the surge to the Russian military's apparent efforts to replenish its ranks while avoiding salary payments to families of missing or deceased soldiers. Some court rulings [reviewed](#) by Mediazona suggest army commanders sought to declare soldiers missing or dead in order to remove them from unit rosters and accelerate recruitment.

Such rulings also allow the military to halt salary payments to families. While salaries

continue if a soldier is listed as missing, they stop once a court formally declares them missing or dead.

Families are eligible for 5 million rubles (\$50,000) in compensation only if a court separately declares a soldier dead.

Related article: [Verified Russian Deaths in Ukraine War Exceed 90K](#)

Mediazona said the majority of the 20,040 court filings in 2024 concealed plaintiffs' names. However, the outlet was able to establish a military connection in 5,090 cases — up from 500 in 2023 and only “dozens” in 2022.

“The courts avoid publicity by concealing claimants and withholding decisions. This interferes with calculations because only circumstantial evidence singles out military cases,” Mediazona said.

The report comes more than a week after Mediazona and BBC Russia [verified](#) the names of more than 91,000 Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine since the start of the invasion nearly three years ago.

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