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Moscow Renews Military Recruitment Efforts Despite U.S. Push for Peace Talks – Vyorstka

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A contract recruitment point in Moscow. **Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency**

Moscow city authorities are ramping up efforts to recruit contract soldiers for the war in Ukraine following several months of relative quiet, the independent Vyorstka news website reported, citing sources in the city government and city agencies.

The report comes despite the United States pushing for a negotiated end to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. On Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff flew to St. Petersburg to meet with President Vladimir Putin and Russian Direct Investment Fund head Kirill Dmitriev to discuss the peace talks.

Recruitment quotas have been distributed to districts across Moscow, one city official told Vyorstka.

Another source from a state-run housing service confirmed that the Moscow Mayor's Office

has instructed it to hang fresh banners advertising military contracts with the Defense Ministry and go door-to-door to hand out leaflets.

“At the end of last year, the authorities quickly scaled back all the campaigns — the banners, the flyers,” the source said. “But now it’s all ramping back up again.”

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New military recruitment points have been opened at Moscow metro stations including Lyublino, Savyolovskaya, Rimskaya, Kuzminki and Belorusskaya.

“Every morning on my way to work, I’m approached by several people asking if I want to sign a contract,” another city official said. “You can tell they’ve significantly stepped up their efforts.”

References to contract recruitment for Russia’s “special military operation” appeared in about 7,000 Telegram posts in January and 6,800 in February. In March, that number surged to a record 21,700. During the first week of April alone, the figure reached 7,000.

Recruiters say they are encouraging people to enlist by touting alleged gains on the battlefield — such as the “liberation” of the Kursk region from Ukrainian forces — as well as spreading stories about supposed war crimes by Kyiv's forces.

Nevertheless, financial hardship remains the main motivator for people to sign military contracts.

“The vast majority of our candidates earn less than 100,000 rubles [$1,200] a month,” the recruiter told Vyorstka. “Around half make closer to 50,000 [$600]. Almost all of them say they want to sort out their finances or get a new place to live.”

The ramped-up efforts appear to be yielding results.

Nine hundred and thirty-three people signed contracts with the Defense Ministry at the enlistment office on Yablochkova Ulitsa between April 1 and April 10, compared with 499 during the same period in March, 503 in February and 341 in January, Vyorstka said.

The average number of volunteers processed at the city’s main recruitment center rose from 10 per day in mid-March to more than 100 per day in April. Over 6,300 Moscow residents have signed contracts to join the military since the start of the year.

According to NATO intelligence, Russian forces are sustaining significant daily casualties. Over the past three years, approximately 250,000 Russian soldiers and officers have been killed, with total casualties — killed and wounded — now estimated at more than 900,000.

An independent tally by the BBC’s Russian service and the Mediazona news website has verified the identities of more than 100,000 Russian soldiers killed in the war.

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