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# Ukraine Evacuates 43 Deportees Held on Russian-Georgian Border

By AFP

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Ukrainian citizens stuck at the Russian-Georgian border **Telegram/Tbilisi_life**

Ukraine said Saturday it had evacuated 43 of its citizens recently deported from Russia who were being held in Georgia in dire conditions, accusing Moscow of "weaponizing" deportations.

At least 56 Ukrainians, mostly prisoners who completed their sentences and were subsequently ordered to leave Russia, were being held in a basement facility near the Russian-Georgian border, according to aid group Volunteers Tbilisi.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga said 43 Ukrainians, many lacking documents, had been evacuated from Georgia via Moldova, "including former political prisoner Andrii Kolomiyets."

More people still remain in "difficult" conditions at the Russian-Georgian border, Sybiga said

on X.

The treatment of those held at the border facility near the Dariali crossing is "inhumane," said Maria Belkina, the head of Volunteers Tbilisi.

"They are without basic necessities — food, water, sanitation," she told AFP, adding that some of the deportees had medical conditions, including suspected tuberculosis and HIV.

Russia may be accelerating deportations ahead of expected changes to Georgian migration laws in September, which are aimed at tightening entries, she added.

While Georgia has not officially closed the border to Ukrainian nationals, Belkina said a recent policy shift has delayed entry.

"Russia is weaponizing the deportation of Ukrainian citizens through Georgia," Sybiga said, calling on Russia to transport the deportees directly to its border with Ukraine instead.

It was not clear how many people remained in the border facility, which only has 17 beds and no basic amenities and where some have been kept for weeks, according to Volunteers Tbilisi.

Rights groups estimate up to 800 more Ukrainians could be transferred to the border in the coming weeks.

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