

Mobilization in Ukraine: Zelensky government on a manhunt

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6 July 2023

This article describes the systematic violations of human and democratic rights that occur in the NATO-backed drive of the Ukrainian government to forcibly draft ever more men into the army. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians are estimated to have already died in the war, with many more wounded. The author, Maxim Goldarb, is the head of the “Union of Left Forces of Ukraine - For New Socialism” party in Ukraine which opposes the NATO war against Russia and has been banned and persecuted by the Zelensky government.

One of the most burning issues in Ukrainian society over the past year and a half has been the mobilization into the army. In our country, everyone is well aware of the enormous scale that not only the mobilization itself has reached, but also of numerous, systemic violations of human rights in the course of mobilization. However, most of the media in Western countries hush up this information.

The law in Ukraine provides definite rules for the procedure of military registration and conscription to military service of conscripts and reservists. In particular, it regulates the procedure for delivery of summonses for conscription.

A summons for military service is a written document that is issued in the name of a specific person. The summons must be prepared in advance, and cannot be filled out in front of the person to whom it is handed. If the summons is issued correctly, the conscript is obliged to appear before the relevant state body responsible for mobilization—the Territorial Center for Recruitment and Social Support (TCR or TTsK in Russian and SS or SP in Russian). But if the summons has been issued incorrectly, the conscript does not have such an obligation.

According to the law, summonses cannot be delivered

by messenger message, text message, phone call or e-mail. Employees of recruitment centers are not allowed to write out summonses “on the spot” in front of the person to whom the summons is addressed, or to add data to the partially completed form of the summons.

However, in practice, the legal framework for mobilization in Ukraine is being violated systematically and on a mass-scale. To name but a few cases:

- In mid-January 2023, representatives of the TCR tried to check documents on the street in Odessa in order to issue a summons for military service on the spot.

- In Zaporozhzhia, in mid-January 2023, TCR employees, together with the police, stopped people on the street and filled out empty summonses. This case was recorded on video.

- In late January 2023, the police detained people in villages and sent them, even without summonses, to the TCR.

- In late February 2023, in the city of Berehove in Transcarpathia, employees of the TCR demanded documents from citizens on the street and issued summonses on the spot.

Having seen enough of such methods of mobilization, many men, while on the streets, have begun to hide from people in military uniform (the mobilization is carried out by the military personnel of the TCR).

Then the authorities began to use even more blatant methods in order to send as many people as possible to the war.

- In January 2023, in Odessa, representatives of the TCR hid inside an ambulance, and ten, when they saw men of military age (from 18 to 60 years old), they jumped out onto the street, handed out summons and forcibly dragged those who resisted into the ambulance. Even the military was soon forced to admit this fact.

• In late January—early February 2023, a number of cases were recorded in which TCR employees, either together with the police or independently, were literally catching people on the streets of Odessa and a number of other Ukrainian cities.

• In Ternopil in mid-February 2023, representatives of the TCR grabbed men of military age at a bus station and forced them into the bus.

Similar cases were reported in February 2023 in: Chernomorsk; Transcarpathia; Kropyvnytsky; Cherkasy and many other cities and regions.

There is no way to classify these cases other than as kidnappings—a criminal offense. This is also proven by a number of court decisions.

On March 3, 2023, the district court of Nikolaev ordered that a complaint by citizen I. Dirk about a criminal offense be entered into the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations (ERDR). The applicant provided a video recording showing how a group of persons in military uniform forced him into a car and took him against his will to one of the regional Territorial Centers for Recruitment and Social Support. The complaint was filed under Articles 146, 371 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (unlawful deprivation of liberty or kidnapping; knowingly unlawful detention, custody, house arrest or detention).

On March 7, 2023, in Odessa, on April 10 Street, employees of the TCR forcibly grabbed a citizen off the street and took him to serve the summons. In the evening, his wife wrote a statement to the police about the illegal kidnapping of her husband. Criminal proceedings were opened in the case.

In addition, there have been repeated reports about cases in which summons are handed out as a means of criminal or administrative punishment, which is illegal. Thus, on March 20, 2023, a video appeared of an incident in which an Odessa taxi driver expressed “insufficiently patriotic thoughts”. Then, on March 22, 2023, it was reported that “he was found and drafted into the army.”

These examples constitute only a relatively small list of cases of a large number of human rights violations during the mobilization. In fact, there are thousands such examples, and we only learn about those cases that are caught on video and are made public on social media or in the press.

The Ukrainian government of Volodymyr Zelensky

has organized a hunt for its own citizens. Men of military age, in gross violation of the law, are seized off the streets and forcibly sent into the army. Then, in a great many cases they are sent to the front with virtually no military training. As a result, they quickly die or are seriously injured.

By now, many men avoid going out at all and try to stay at home as much as possible. However, the need to work in order to provide for themselves and their families makes it impossible for most men to avoid appearing in public places.

Most Ukrainian men then become “cannon fodder” simply because they lack any kind of military training. Yet this does not go for the “chosen ones”—the ruling elite. None of its representatives—the president’s entourage, ministers, deputies, as well as the oligarchs—are fighting at the front. The same goes for their adult sons. All of them are either deep in the rear, or even went abroad without hindrance. They prefer to make money from war rather than die in it. The ruling elite leaves the right to die in this war to the working people, to the poor, to which, at this point, the majority of the population of Ukraine belong. In this context, it should also be noted that in Ukraine’s shattered economy, military salaries are just about the only possible income for the remaining able-bodied people who are forced to risk their lives and health in order to feed their families.

In the mobilization, the class essence of the ruling oligarchy has manifested itself with complete clarity. This also explains why the leading Western media maintain complete silence about this: they desperately try to preserve the false media image—which they themselves created—of a supposedly existing “unity of the democratic Ukrainian government and people”. But this has little to do with reality.



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