

Crimeans Avoid Military Conscription Until 2015

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Crimeans will not be conscripted into the Russian army until 2015, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said.

Shoigu said that conscription cannot take place while the military conscription system on the Black Sea peninsula remains different to that of Russia, Interfax reported Monday.

Crimeans could have been spared military service altogether had the region not been reunited with Russia earlier this month due to the fact that former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich scrapped mandatory conscription to Ukraine's military last year.

Shoigu also said that the Russian army will conscript 154,000 people from April to July this year, a figure that was confirmed by the Kremlin press service. Conscription applies only to men aged 18 to 27.

Last year, 800 fewer conscripts were recruited.

Russian authorities have said they will gradually phase out conscription and switch to a professional army.

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