

Russian Army Plans Short-Term Contracts for Soldiers Serving in Syria

October 06, 2016



Denis Abramov / Vedomosti

The Russian Army is set to introduce short-term contracts for soldiers fighting the Islamic State in Syria, [the Vedomosti newspaper reported Thursday.](#)

A new bill submitted to Russia's State Duma will allow soldiers to sign contracts for the duration of their overseas combat missions if they last for less than 12 months.

The army is currently only permitted to use short-term contracts in exceptional circumstances such as natural disasters or civil unrest.

Standard contracts for officers and non-commissioned officers are for five years, while soldiers and sergeants are contracted for two to three years. Under Russian law, only contracted soldiers can be deployed abroad.

The bill hopes to help the army “quickly form

consolidated and non-standard military units.”

It is also set to target military specialists such as engineers who may not want to serve in Syria for long periods of time.

A number of experts have also speculated that the move could be a bid for Russia to cut down on its [alleged use of mercenaries](#) in the conflict. The RBC newspaper reported in August that the Kremlin was spending up to \$150 million every month on private contractors in Syria, a claim which the government denies. Russian law officially forbids the existence of private military companies.

The Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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