

Russian Soldier Labeled ‘Traitor’ for Refusing to Fight in Ukraine – Lawyer

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A conscript holds a certificate of a citizen subject to the draft during medical examination at a military conscription office. **Dmitry Feoktistov/TASS**

Updated at 1:10 p.m. on April 14 to add that the soldier's lawyer has taken down the original photo of the service card.

A Russian soldier's service card was stamped "traitor" for refusing to participate in the war in Ukraine, a veteran and lawyer said Wednesday amid regular reports of refusals and low morale within the ranks.

Maxim Grebenyuk, who had served as a military prosecutor and currently consults soldiers who reject deployment in Ukraine, [posted](#) a photograph of the card with the non-regulation stamp on his social media.

"Prone to betrayal, lies and deceit. He refused to participate in the special military operation," it reads.

The red stamp bears the name of Captain K. Zharov, head of the 136th Guards Motor Rifle Brigade based in southern Russia's republic of Dagestan. The soldier's name was not revealed.

Grebenyuk said the contract soldier who shared the photograph was offered deployment in Ukraine instead of rehabilitation leave after a seven-month stint in Syria, where Russia has been on the ground in support of the regime since 2015.

"Records such as this are aimed only to insult and humiliate a serviceman," he [told](#) the Mediazona news website.

"This stamp says nothing other than the command's powerlessness to punish him otherwise," Grebenyuk said. "They can't do anything else, they can't open a criminal case, that's why they did this nasty thing."

Russia's Defense Ministry [shared](#) an anonymous Telegram channel's post calling news about the stamp "fake" and citing the date May 5 of the soldier's discharge as one of the reasons.

But Grebenyuk defended the card's authenticity, saying the military regularly puts soldiers on leave before releasing them.

"He was given leave to then be discharged, as is done in the army," Grebenyuk said.

On Thursday, Grebenyuk said he took down the original photograph to comply with Russia's new law punishing information that authorities deem "fake" with jail terms as long as 15 years.

"The information was provided solely for the purpose of providing legal assistance to the serviceman," he [wrote](#), adding that he is appealing the soldier's dismissal.

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