

First Criminal Case Opened Against Russian Conscripts Refusing to Fight

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Recently conscripted Russian men **Yegor Aleyev** / TASS

The first criminal case against conscripted soldiers refusing to fight in Ukraine has opened in Russia, according to [footage](#) circulating on social media over the weekend.

The video shows two soldiers who allegedly refused to go to the frontlines being pulled out of a lineup by military police, according to the [Veteran's Notes](#) Telegram channel. Under [Russian law](#), they face up to three years in jail if they are found guilty of refusing to follow orders.

Tatyana Degtyareva [confirmed](#) Sunday to Polygon.Media that her husband Yuri Degtyarev, who was seen in the video, had refused to be deployed as "cannon fodder" on the front lines.

After being called up in September, Degtyarev was sent to Luhansk in eastern Ukraine with "no combat experience" and "no proper military training," Degtyareva told Polygon.Media.

Degtyarev's unit decided to retreat after coming under fire from the Ukrainian military in the Luhansk region, his wife said. According to Degtyareva, her husband was detained last week at

a military base in Russia's Belgorod region.

"This incident appears to have a demonstrative effect," military lawyer Maxim Grebenuk told The Moscow Times, adding that there had been "no need" to detain soldiers at the military base.

Since the beginning of "partial" mobilization in September, reports have emerged of Russian conscripts and their relatives protesting over the lack of training and equipment provided to soldiers, as well as the fact that new recruits are now being sent into battle, rather than being used in supporting roles.

According to Degtyareva, those soldiers such as her husband who refused to go to the frontline were sent to "some basement."

Around 300 mobilized soldiers were being held in a basement in the village of Zaitsevo in the Luhansk region for refusing to fight, the Astra Telegram channel [reported](#) last week, citing relatives.

The Russian authorities last month [opened](#) a criminal case against a 32-year-old man who had allegedly refused to sign papers summoning him to the local recruitment office — but prosecutors later [dropped](#) all charges in what would have been the first criminal case in Russia for draft dodging since the war in Ukraine began.

However, investigators have subsequently said that they intend to appeal the decision of the Prosecutor's Office and expect to reopen the case, [according to](#) human rights lawyer Pavel Chikov.

If convicted, the man could face a fine of 200,000 rubles (\$3,407) or up to two years in prison.

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