

Russia: Conscription is violence and slavery

Tuesday 8 November 2022, by [Feminist Anti-War Resistance/FAS \(Russia\)](#) (Date first published: 1 November 2022).

An open letter from anti-war initiatives against forced conscription: what are we fighting for and what to do now?

Today, November 1, autumn conscription begins in Russia. Young men and men from 18 to 27 who have no deferment will be pressured by the state to get them into the army - whether they want them to or not. This is an abominable and cruel act of violence against citizens. (https://sun9-40.userapi.com/impf/H2A5tIVs7IUlbS_u1rQR2sUZFWaZgbWn5m4Bkg/u7o-MCtXN6U.jpg?size=1080x1080&quality=95&sign=2c5ba777cd7d8e3e5914e02eca5da68d&type=album)

We oppose compulsory conscription. And here's why:

1. Conscripts are often forced to sign contracts. Despite promises by the authorities, they end up in the war zone - and die. Dozens of such cases have been recorded.
2. Compulsory conscription is in fact legalized slavery. Men are deprived of their freedom and civil rights for a year, torn away from their lives, family and friends and forced to work against their will.
3. Brutal initiation rites (dedovshchina) and corruption reign in today's Russian army. Many conscripts return with physical and psychological injuries. The number of suicides of conscripts is increasing.
4. The army is a rigid hierarchical system that fosters dysfunctional personality traits: blind faith in authority, unquestioning obedience. It also fosters conformism, militarism and sexism.
5. The army shapes men's unrealistic and sometimes dangerous perceptions of relationships between people, genders and gender roles, which also has a negative impact on women.
6. Conscription is used as a tool of repression. Opposition activists and politicians are intimidated by being sent to the army, and sometimes they are actually sent to serve__ as a punishment.

We are convinced that citizens are not the property of the state and slavery has no place in modern society. This is why we are against forced conscription and the call-up..

What should those who are subject to conscription do now?

1. It is better not to ignore the summonses received against one's signature (only against one's signature, a summons in a post box is not a summons), because evasion may result in a criminal case under Article 328 of the RF Criminal Code.

In general, it is safe for conscripts to come to the military registration and enlistment office. However, you must be prepared, know your rights, and be able to assert them. The materials of specialized human rights defenders (for example, the document of the "Movement of Conscientious Objectors") may help.

See:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vRssJBq9lNRKlbZ5YnuNn0Pv5_OOiVDBWOUiTnWGEOLgmE1Cw7jcbzeFFAXdj8NUhg-m93cyAHSa8_f/pub)

Do not go to the enlistment office if your medical documents are only for category B. There is a high risk that you will be mobilised as soon as you receive your military ID.

2. Consult human rights defenders, complain about all violations and pursue legal action. Human rights defenders will help you to draw up complaints and go to court. It is quite possible that the proceedings will drag on for a long time and the draft will simply end.

If they try to draft you (which is unlikely) - demand to replace military service with alternative civilian service (ACS). The right to it is guaranteed by the Constitution.

Human rights organizations:

“Agora” (<https://t.me/pchikov>)

“Appeal to Conscience” (<https://t.me/peaceplea>)

“Movement of conscientious objectors” (<https://t.me/stoparmy>)

The Recruit’s School (<https://t.me/netprizyv>)

“Soldiers’ Mothers of St. Petersburg” (<https://t.me/s/solmspb>)

What should everyone else do?

Disseminate information about the draft, share with friends and relatives the contacts of human rights defenders and memos on how to avoid the draft. Not going into the army is real, but many do not know about it and are afraid to fight. That’s why awareness is crucial - and you can help with that!

Signed:

Vesna Movement (https://t.me/vesna_democrat)

Conscientious Objector Movement (<https://t.me/stoparmy>)

Feminist Anti-War Resistance (<https://t.me/femagainstar>)

“Together” Movement (<https://t.me/dvizhenievmete>)

Resonance (http://t.me/rezonans_media)

Green Ribbon (<https://t.me/zelenayalenta>)

Media Partisans (<https://t.me/mpartisans>)

Angry Chuvashia (<https://t.me/ChuvashiaDream>)

Velvet Street (<https://t.me/velvetstreet>)

“We’ll get it.” (https://t.me/Poluchitsya_Mir)

Wake Up Movement (https://t.me/wakeup_russia)

“Close Behind Me Tver” (<http://t.me/tverskey>)

Time Movement(https://t.me/vremya_movement)

“Anti-War Hospital” (<https://t.me/stranabolna>)

Voice of Reason (https://t.me/golos_publish)

The Eighth Initiative Group (<https://t.me/Femspb>)

DISSIDENT (<https://t.me/rusprotiv>)

FreeRussiaNL (<https://t.me/FreeRussiaNL>)

MIRVAGEN (<https://t.me/mirvazhen>)

If you represent an anti-war initiative, you can sign the form (<https://forms.gle/RorsKmcngsasvPKb7>). The list of signatories will be updated on the website

(<https://vesna.democrat/2022/11/01/prizyv-eto-nasilie-i-rabstvo/>).

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P.S.

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