



War in Ukraine, the Kremlin's trap: recruitment in Belarus and the nightmare of a new Mobilization in Russia

**A race against time to gather “cannon fodder” while avoiding a
general mobilization in Russia that could undermine domestic
stability.**

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Russia has long regarded Belarus as a convenient reservoir of manpower to feed its war machine against Ukraine. Minsk's deep economic dependence, the political vulnerability of Lukashenko's regime, and the absence of legal safeguards give Moscow almost unlimited room to maneuver.

However, the aggressive recruitment of Belarusian citizens is only one piece of a much larger puzzle: a race against time to gather “cannon fodder” while avoiding a general mobilization at

home that could undermine domestic stability.



How the recruitment network in Belarus works

In recent months, there has been an explosion of **recruitment advertisements** aimed at Belarusians for contracts with the **Russian army**. Propaganda has spread extensively through **Telegram** channels, provincial **Viber** chats, and even virtual neighborhood bulletin boards.

The effect is often **surreal**: between an ad selling vegetables and one offering private lessons appears an offer of “**high pay, benefits, and Russian citizenship**” for those willing to take up arms.

Investigations by independent outlets such as **DW**, **TVNET**, **CityDog**, and **Current Time** highlight the systematic nature of the campaign. The Belarusian dissident group **Belpol** documents how recruiters use local phone numbers to create a false sense of trust, promising:

- **Exorbitant salaries** and signing bonuses (up to more than 4 million rubles).
- Assistance in settling personal debts.
- **Expungement of criminal records**.
- Russian passport and military pension.

The main targets are **economically vulnerable men**, from rural areas or small towns, often unaware that Belarusian law punishes **mercenary activity** with sentences of up to seven years in prison. Recruiters reassure them about the operation's supposed "legality," swiftly move them across the border — through training centers in Smolensk or Pskov — and assign them to **assault units**, the sectors with the highest mortality rate on the front line.

"I went there for personal revenge." A Belarusian who signed a contract with the Russian army describes heavy losses, the deaths of two fellow soldiers, and how he ended up in Ukrainian captivity. More on our YouTube. ↓ <https://t.co/l7fatMcJgH>

— BELPOL (@osbbelpol) [August 13, 2026](#)

From the North Korean contingent to foreign mercenaries: Moscow's desperation

The pressure on Belarus is part of an emergency global strategy through which Moscow is trying to offset a dramatic rate of human losses.

To avoid the political impact of a domestic mass conscription drive, Russia has progressively increased its use of foreign forces:

- **Troops from North Korea:** As confirmed by military intelligence sources and international reports, Pyongyang's leadership has sent thousands of soldiers and military technicians to Russia. These North Korean contingents, often lacking specific training to counter modern drone attacks, are deployed in the highest-risk areas of the front.
- **The transnational network in Asia and Africa:** Reports by Ukrainian authorities and human rights NGOs indicate that Moscow intends to recruit more than 18,000 foreigners a year, drawing heavily on recruits from Central Asia, Africa, Latin America, and South Asia through deception, promises of employment, or coercion.

Conscription panic in Russia: the new mass exodus to Georgia and Serbia

Despite the influx of men from Belarus and the use of foreign units, rumors of a new and imminent **wave of forced mobilization** are becoming increasingly persistent across the country.

Signs of an administrative crackdown — such as tracking reservists through company records and collecting family data — have triggered a **new wave of panic among the Russian civilian population**. Unlike in September 2022, when the exodus began only after Vladimir Putin's official address, this time tens of thousands of citizens are leaving Russia as a precaution:

- **The route to Georgia:** At border crossings such as *Verkhny Lars*, record peaks of tens of thousands of crossings per day have been reported. It is estimated that more than 100,000 Russian men of conscription age have crossed the Georgian border in recent weeks to avoid being called up.
- **The Serbia and Balkans hub:** Serbia, which maintains a permissive visa regime toward Moscow, continues to see a steady flow of young Russians, professionals, and reservists seeking refuge and opposed to forced recruitment.

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Belarusian society between fear and regime silence

In Belarus, the population is watching this situation with growing concern. Many citizens report a mass distribution of recruitment promotional messages, but police authorities are ignoring the complaints.

Officially, Aleksandr Lukashenko's regime pretends the problem does not exist, but in practice it gives Russian recruiters free rein in order not to jeopardize the flow of subsidies from the Kremlin. Moreover, since Russia and Belarus share the structure of the so-called "Union State," Moscow's authorities are trying to promote the idea that "equal rights" should entail "**equal military obligations**".

As highlighted by the **Institute for the Study of War (ISW)**, this legal convergence and economic pressure are turning Belarus into a perfect trap: a buffer territory from which to draw men to feed an ever more voracious war.

News link: <https://it.euronews.com/2026/09/25/guerra-in-ucraina-come-mosca-recluta-soldati-in-bielorussia>