

Ukraine Mobilization: New “Recruits”, Forced and “Dragged Off The Streets to Fight”: Former Ukrainian PM

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Mobilisation reserves in Ukraine have been emptied while the military calls for troop rotation at the front, which cannot be done, former Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov said on his Telegram channel on October 23. This is unsurprising as Ukraine has been illegally mobilising men since at least January, demonstrating the alarming lack of manpower the country has, an issue even well before the failed so-called “Spring Offensive,” which actually began in early June.

“The mobilisation in Ukraine has turned into a real nightmare for the Ukrainians [...] Ukraine’s reserves have been emptied, while at the front, the military is asking for a rotation [of troops], which cannot be done due to lack of personnel in the Ukrainian Armed Forces,” [said](#) the former Ukrainian Prime Minister.

According to Azarov’s publication, recruitment centres began attracting former prisoners to “capture” as much of the population as possible because the mobilisation resource was exhausted, and many people fled the country in any way possible.

“Thus, as long as the Ukrainian authorities use force against their own people, there will be fewer and fewer supporters in the country, and fewer volunteers will appear in the ranks of the Ukrainian forces,” the former Ukrainian prime minister added.

“This means that with such sentiments in society, Ukraine has a catastrophically low chance of holding its own,” Azarov concluded.

Earlier, a spokesperson of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said that

the mobilisation potential of Ukraine still allows additional recruitment of men of military age without changing the legislation. Ukraine has been under martial law since February 24, 2022, and the next day, Volodymyr Zelensky signed a decree on general mobilisation, and thus, male citizens aged 18 to 60 are prohibited from leaving Ukraine's borders. In fact, the legislation is so draconian that Ukrainian men face prison sentences of up to five years for evading military service during mobilisation.

However, even the few provisions within the draconian legislation are being violated, such as the procedure for delivering summonses – a written document issued in the name of a specific person – for conscription. The summons must be prepared in advance, and if issued correctly, the conscript must appear before the relevant state body responsible for mobilisation. According to the law, summonses cannot be delivered by messenger, text, phone, or e-mail, and they cannot be filled out in front of the person to whom it is handed. If the summons is issued incorrectly, the conscript does not have to appear for mobilisation.

Yet, in Ukraine, these few provisions in the legislation are being violated on a mass scale.

One such case occurred in January 2023 in Odessa, when military recruiters hid inside an ambulance, and when they saw men of military age, they jumped out onto the street, handed out summons and forcibly dragged those who resisted into the ambulance. A month later, in Ternopil, military recruiters grabbed men at a bus station and forced them into the bus. Then, on March 20, a video appeared in which a taxi driver in Odessa expressed “insufficiently patriotic thoughts”, but two days later, he was reportedly “found and drafted into the army.”

These are just three examples of countless Ukrainians being literally dragged off the streets to fight in a war they have no interest in being involved in. This is also a major contributing reason to the utter failure of the so-called “spring offensive.” These forcibly conscripted men became the “cannon fodder” we heard about over the summer because they naturally had low morale and lacked military training.

In addition, many men are motivated to join the Ukrainian military just because it is one of the few secure sources of income, no matter how meagre it is, due to the destroyed economy. However, many of these men end up dead, become incapacitated due to injury, or do their best to avoid conflict to preserve their lives.

It is recalled that Ukrainian investigators detained Yevhen Borisov on charges of illegal enrichment, dereliction of duty, and evading military service in July. Borisov was fired as the military commissioner of the Odessa region in June after investigative reports found he and family members had bought property in Spain along with luxury automobiles worth \$4 million, money he attained from taking bribes for exemptions, among other reasons.

In this way, Ukraine does not only have the problem of empty reserves, as highlighted by Azarov, but deep corruption that means many military-age men can avoid conscription, so long as they can pay the bribe, whilst poor Ukrainian men, which today forms most of the male population, are literally dragged off the streets to participate in a futile war against Russia, which they know they cannot win.

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