

Ukrainian Draft-dodging Scandal Continues with New Arrests as Citizens Attempt to Flee Service

The Ukrainian authorities are clamping down on money-making schemes related to draft dodging

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The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) has reported that another ring of people engaged in helping people to [evade the draft](#) and leave the country has been identified and broken up. With Ukraine short on manpower at the front, it is racing to fill its ranks.

The last set of people detained were connected with the port in Izmail, in the Odessa region. Bribes were elicited from men of service age who wanted to leave the country. They were provided with papers claiming they were navigators on cargo ships, costing between \$700 and \$1,200.

Those detained are accused of taking a total of \$55,000 in such payments. They were allegedly caught in the act, arrested and could face jail sentences of up to 10 years.

The SBU has also detained a deacon of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Odessa for allegedly helping men to leave the country under the guise of being prepared for ordination in the Church, with a minimal fee per person of \$4,500. The deacon managed to aid six individuals in such a manner before also being arrested.

Another popular way for earning money on draft dodgers is the issuing of medical certificates, certifying that the individual paying was unable to serve in the army. The group the SBU identified was issuing up to 20 such certificates daily, for a fee of \$7,000 to \$10,000.

President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday issued a decree ordering the verification of the legal veracity of all medical certificates that release men from military service duty. These

cases will be reviewed and new medical tests enforced.

At the end of August, there were examples of corruption in the Ukrainian army disclosed that led to the dismissal of former Defense Minister [Oleksii Reznikov](#). The corruption allegations included irregularities involving procurement for the army and the issuing of papers for the release from military service.

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Featured image: A Ukrainian servicemen stands by a burned military vehicle near Sytniaky, Ukraine, March 3, 2022. Photo courtesy General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine/Facebook

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