

# Ukrainian Soldiers Threaten to “Go AWOL”, Abandon the Battlefield, If They Are Not Demobilized

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*According to the Ukrainian portal Strana, Kiev is facing problems in increasing the number of military personnel as a new mobilisation law will take at least eight months to be imposed. Worsening the situation, military personnel in Odessa are threatening to abandon their positions and even kill if the new law does not allow them to demobilise.*

On April 11, Ukraine’s Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) approved a bill on expanding mobilisation for the military. The National Security and Defence Committee removed the provision on demobilisation from the bill on the eve of its presentation to the Verkhovna Rada for its second reading. Dmitry Lazutkin, a representative of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, later said that a separate bill on demobilisation was planned, which would take eight months.

Ukrainian journalists in Odessa questioned military personnel about their thoughts towards the government’s decision to exclude demobilisation from the bill on military conscription.

In that case, “I will leave the unit without permission,” one of the soldiers told the Ukrainian portal [Strana](#).

Another Ukrainian serviceman said that the deputies of the Verkhovna Rada should go to the front on an equal footing with them, whilst another believes that changes are necessary in the country and that it is not possible to fight with the same soldiers all the time, making demobilisation necessary.

“I’ll shoot them all. They don’t have such a right... So now I get up and go back to the

war whilst they have grown their bellies and will sit in the Verkhovna Rada? This shouldn't happen," said another soldier.

"There is the expression 'Servant of the People.' It is not we who must serve them, but they who must serve us," added another, in reference to the name of the ruling party founded by Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky.

These threats to go AWOL come as the New York Times reported that since the start of Russia's special military operation, thousands of Ukrainian men have attempted to flee across the Tisza River from mandatory conscription. According to Romanian authorities cited by the American newspaper, approximately 6,000 men have arrived in their country across the river since February 2022.

"That thousands of Ukrainian men have chosen to risk the swim rather than face the dangers as soldiers on the eastern front highlights the challenge for President Volodymyr Zelensky as he seeks to mobilize fresh troops after more than two years of bruising, bloody trench warfare with Russia," noted [The New York Times](#).

The new law toughens penalties for attempting to evade military conscription and aims to increase the number of troops on the frontline. The newspaper also highlights that many of the Ukrainians who rushed to volunteer have fought continuously since 2022, with only two weeks of annual leave.

"Soldiers are enlisted until the end of hostilities, with no defined date for release from their obligation to serve. With casualty rates high, being drafted, soldiers say, is like getting a one-way ticket to the front," the New York Times reported.

The escape of Ukrainians from the country has allowed human trafficking to flourish. In 2023, for example, the Mukachevo Border Guard dismantled 56 criminal gangs involved in this activity.

According to Lieutenant Lesya Fedorova, spokesperson for the Mukachevo Border Guard unit, and whom the newspaper cited, the cost to be taken to the other side of the Ukrainian border currently amounts to \$10,000. This is incredibly expensive when considering that the average monthly salary is about \$500.

Crossing to the Romanian side via the Tisza River also carries dangers, with Fedorova reporting that at least 22 bodies have been found on the river's banks, with many more likely having drowned but never found. Yet, this is a risk Ukrainians are evidently willing to take since deployment to the frontlines all but guarantees death or permanent injuries.

It is evident that the new mobilisation law will struggle to recruit the 450,000-500,000 men the Kiev regime is believed to want since there is no morale among the general population and because all those who are motivated to fight have already volunteered. Failure to mobilise enough men will also lead to active soldiers abandoning their posts or even mutiny, a scenario which will be devastating for the country once Russia launches its offensive, expected at the end of spring or summer, and the Ukrainian military is driven back with high casualty numbers.

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