

4.2. Conscription

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4.2.1. General regulations

According to Article 59 of the Constitution, all Russian citizens have ‘a duty and obligation’ to defend the country.’ The same Article stipulates that every citizen is obliged to ‘carry out military service according to the federal law.’⁷³⁹ One-year military service is compulsory for all Russian men⁷⁴⁰ aged between 18 and 30 years old.⁷⁴¹ The upper conscription age was raised from 27 years as of 1 January 2024.⁷⁴² Upon completion of the mandatory military service, conscripts are transferred to the inactive mobilisation reserve,⁷⁴³ and are eligible for future call-ups.⁷⁴⁴

The military draft for obligatory military service is carried out semi-annually: between 1 April and 15 July and between 1 October and 31 December. Three groups of Russian nationals have different conscription periods: residents of the Far North or certain areas equated to the Far North (from 1 May to 15 July and from 1 November to 31 December), conscripts living in rural areas and engaged in sowing or harvesting works (only fall conscription from 15 October to 31 December is carried out), and teaching staff (conscription is organised only in spring, between 1 May and 15 July).⁷⁴⁵

On 28 October 2025, the State Duma adopted a draft law to replace the existing bi-annual conscription process with a year-round draft, allowing military enlistment offices to organise medical and psychological examinations and conscription board meetings throughout the year.⁷⁴⁶ The law was signed by President Putin on 4 November 2025.⁷⁴⁷ Under the new law, effective from 1 January 2026,⁷⁴⁸ the duration of the conscription periods is to be determined by a presidential decree (each year),⁷⁴⁹ while the dispatch of conscripts to military units will take place between 1 April and 15 July and between 1 October and 31 December.⁷⁵⁰

As per Article 25 of the Federal Law on Military Duty and Military Service, conscription is carried out upon a presidential order, which also determines the number of conscripts to be drafted.⁷⁵¹ In 2025, the government decided to conscript a total of 295 000 men (160 000 in spring⁷⁵² and 135 00 in autumn⁷⁵³), which is the highest number in nine years.⁷⁵⁴

On 21 April 2025, President Putin signed a law allowing men of conscription age who had received conscription summonses and completed conscription procedures, such as medical examinations, but were not assigned to military service, to be drafted within a year without repeating the conscription procedures.⁷⁵⁵ While the law became effective on 1 October 2025, according to human rights groups that support conscripts, in Moscow this practice was already applied in October 2024.⁷⁵⁶ Similarly to previous years, in 2025, the authorities stated that conscripts will serve only in Russia and not in the Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine and would not ‘conduct tasks related to the war.’⁷⁵⁷

As noted by Artem Klyga, in 2024, the heads of the occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions officially announced the start of conscription into obligatory military service, with a representative of the Russian General Staff claiming that military enlistment offices of Donetsk and Luhansk regions met their

2024 conscription targets. According to official reports, conscripts from the occupied territories were deployed to military units in Russia's Southern military district. The source also noted that human rights organisations helping conscripts have not recorded cases when conscripts from the occupied territories would be sent to combat; however, he also pointed out that the information regarding the occupied territories is limited as people who are willing to communicate with human rights groups face pressure.⁷⁵⁸ According to a human rights lawyer, the fact that conscription takes place in the occupied territories in Ukraine suggests that conscripts serve there as well. However, the source similarly noted that they do not take part in combat operations.⁷⁵⁹

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