

4.4.2. Forced recruitment

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Chechen authorities employ distinct methods of military recruitment, compared to other parts of Russia,938 with cases of forced recruitment reported since summer 2022.939 As noted by Memorial, while Ramzan Kadyrov claims that Chechnya deploys to Ukraine 'volunteers' and in numbers that 'fulfilled the plan,' Chechen security resort to such methods as pressure, threats, kidnapping, violence, fabrication of criminal cases, blackmailing, and extortion.940 Moreover, the authorities have reportedly also used such methods as kidnappings of relatives and threatened to 'dishonour' female family members of men refusing to join the military, as reported by the opposition movement NIYSO.941

Longstanding practices also include forced recruitment of prison inmates,942 and intimidation of suspects accused of various minor offences, ranging from traffic violations to alcohol consumption (which is formally prohibited in Chechnya) 943 and drug use944 to petty crimes, such as public disturbances.945 'Volunteering' to serve in Ukraine is routinely presented as an opportunity of repentance.946 The authorities have also pressured critics of Ramzan Kadyrov and LGBTIQ persons to either enlist for military service or face imprisonment.947 Among people subjected to forced recruitment are also relatives and family members of opposition figures, including those who are abroad. Some of them were in their late 50s or 60s, 'indicating that there is no age limit.'948

Recruitment efforts in Chechnya have been heavily driven by certain recruitment quotas assigned to law enforcement agencies.949 In October 2024, police stations and traffic police units were tasked with recruiting 20 – 50 volunteers each.950 According to activists, some agencies which have exceeded the quota used group chats to exchange recruits for 100 000 or 200 000 rubles [1 025 – 2 050 euros] among themselves.951

Security forces reportedly use arbitrary detention of men, stopping cars for alleged traffic violation952 or for travelling together with a woman who is not a relative (staged by the law enforcement officers)953 or detaining men of military age at the borders with other republics of the North Caucasus to check their phones, resulting in their transfer to military unit deployment sites.954

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  Huseyn Aliyev, Online interview with EUAA, 7 October 2025

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Insider (The), “They pointed at some woman and said I’d been caught red-handed”: How Chechen security services honeytrap men into going to war, 25 September 2025, url

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  Memorial, Кадыров: «призвать добровольно» на войну 84 тысячи человек [Kadyrov: ‘voluntarily call up’ 84,000 people for war], 20 December 2024, url

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  Huseyn Aliyev, Online interview with EUAA, 7 October 2025

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  Huseyn Aliyev, Online interview with EUAA, 7 October 2025

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  Huseyn Aliyev, Online interview with EUAA, 7 October 2025; Caucasian Knot, Human rights activists have confirmed the practice sending Chechen residents to the SVO for minor violations, 21 October 2025, url

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  UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova, 15 September 2025, url, para. 130

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Huseyn Aliyev, Online interview with EUAA, 7 October 2025

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  Huseyn Aliyev, Online interview with EUAA, 7 October 2025

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  Memorial, Кадыров: «призвать добровольно» на войну 84 тысячи человек [Kadyrov: ‘voluntarily call up’ 84,000 people for war], 20 December 2024, url; Insider (The), “They pointed at some woman and said I’d been caught red-handed”: How Chechen security services honeytrap men into going to war, 25 September 2025, url

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  Insider (The), “They pointed at some woman and said I’d been caught red-handed”: How Chechen security services honeytrap men into going to war, 25 September 2025, url

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  Memorial, Кадыров: «призвать добровольно» на войну 84 тысячи человек [Kadyrov: ‘voluntarily call up’ 84,000 people for war], 20 December 2024, url

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  Huseyn Aliyev, Online interview with EUAA, 7 October 2025; Insider (The), “They pointed at some woman and said I’d been caught red-handed”: How Chechen security services honeytrap men into going to war, 25 September 2025, url

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  Memorial, Кадыров: «призвать добровольно» на войну 84 тысячи человек [Kadyrov: ‘voluntarily call up’ 84,000 people for war], 20 December 2024, url

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