

IMPACT OF MILITARY  
MOBILIZATION IN RUSSIA  
ON MIGRANT WORKERS  
FROM KYRGYZSTAN

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# IMPACT OF MILITARY MOBILIZATION IN RUSSIA ON MIGRANT WORKERS FROM KYRGYZSTAN

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# PREFACE

This study was conducted to examine possible changes in the situation of migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan on the territory of the Russian Federation from the beginning of 2022 to the present. It assesses the impact of the announced partial military mobilization for Russia's war in Ukraine on the rights of migrant workers. The relevance of the study lies in the need to prevent and develop effective measures to avoid further deterioration of the situation of migrant workers - citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who are engaged in labour activities on the territory of Russia in the context of the declared partial military mobilization.

Sanctions against Russia and the announced partial mobilization have significant negative consequences for the Russian economy; therefore a new problem has been identified as the possible participation of Kyrgyz citizens in military operations on the territories of foreign countries.

The study reveals the specifics of the impact of military mobilization in Russia on migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan.

This study was conducted with the financial support of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in the Kyrgyz Republic. It is intended to develop effective measures for the safety of migrant workers by government agencies, as well as to inform a wide range of people by government agencies.

# INTRODUCTION

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. This act of aggression resulted in huge loss of life and serious damage to Ukraine's infrastructure, economy and environment, turning almost 40% of the country's territory into a minefield. After almost a year of hostilities, Russia continues to attack Ukraine intensively, strengthening the army through mobilization and increasing the defense industry.

The invasion quickly triggered mass displacement within Ukraine and beyond its international borders. Neighboring countries and EU member states became the main refuge for millions of people fleeing conflict zones. The war, aggravated by political repression, has caused a significant outflow of population from Russia to virtually all EECA and far-abroad countries. Moreover, the war has already left a lasting mark on the entire region, affecting its economic, political, demographic and social aspects. It will determine the further development of the region in the coming years.

The war in Ukraine (given its significance for the entire region) runs through the entire regional migration situation for 2023 across Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The importance of migrant workers for the Russian economy is evidenced by the following fact:

According to the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, in 2022 there were 11.8 million cases of foreign workers registering for migration. These statistics include both the renewal of registration of those who have been living in Russia for several years and the initial registration.

Mainly citizens of Central Asia continue to come to Russia. According to the data of the Border Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, the first place is occupied by citizens of Uzbekistan – **41.9%** of the total number of arriving migrants or 1.45 million people, the second place is occupied by citizens of Tajikistan with **28.4%** or 986.7 thousand people, while the third place is occupied by natives of Kyrgyzstan – **16.2%** or 562.6 thousand people.

The imposition of a series of economic sanctions from a number of countries in response to the military aggression against Ukraine has had a significant impact on the country's domestic economy. Thousands of international companies employing large numbers of Central Asian migrants have also left the Russian market, sending their employees on leave without pay.

Migrant workers were the first to feel the crisis. For 34% of them remittances decreased to a significant extent, many had to return home due to lack of employment opportunities. The economic crisis in Russia caused a significant increase in the violation of labour rights of migrants, there were high rates of mass dismissals, wage delays, unpaid work, idle time, etc. All these factors have worsened the situation of migrants and their families.

However, this was not the reason for the decrease in the migration flow from CA countries. Migrant workers remain an important element of the economy of the Russian Federation to this day.

During the war, the resources of Russia's military forces proved insufficient. Without additional mobilization, the Russian army would not have been able to fulfill the tasks set by Russian President Vladimir Putin. The work of private military companies like PMC Wagner actually became a hidden mobilization. Both volunteers and mercenaries as military personnel cooperate with the Russian Ministry of Defense. With the outbreak of war in Ukraine, the Russian authorities have been conducting full-scale campaigns to recruit foreign mercenaries, including migrant workers from Central Asia.

In 2023, the Russian military command plans to recruit more than 415,000 people for contract service, with 300,000 of them serving in the reserve and the rest will be sent to Ukraine to form new units and replenish old ones.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has backed the Defense Ministry's proposal to "recruit for assistance" more than 400,000 military personnel.

This plan to recruit contract servicemen is related to the army reform proposed by Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. According to his plan, by 2026 the number of Russian army personnel should increase from 1.15 to 1.5 million. Half of the personnel should be contract servicemen.

Over the course of this study, through interviews and focus group discussions, the researchers identified repeated attempts by the Russian authorities to recruit migrant workers from Central Asian countries to participate in the hostilities.

According to respondents, recruiters visit mosques, and in migration centers employees offer foreigners service in the Russian army.

Respondents noted that migrants are promised a lump-sum payment of \$2390 in ruble equivalent and a salary of up to \$4160 per month (also in rubles). In addition, Russia has adopted amendments to legislation on accelerated admission to Russian citizenship for those who have signed a contract to serve in the Russian army.

According to respondents, high salaries and the possibility of accelerated acquisition of Russian citizenship may interest a lot of migrants who found themselves in a difficult life situation after the war. The migrant workers who have entered military service are sent to the front line, where the level of losses of Russian troops is extremely high.

The attempt to recruit migrant workers is just one of the ways in which the Russian authorities are trying to achieve the goal stated by the Ministry of Defense, namely to send more than 400,000 "volunteers" to war. As we know, the Russian authorities will try not to announce a new wave of mobilization for as long as possible to avoid the discontent of citizens.



# METHODOLOGY

The main goal of this study was to examine the specifics of the impact of military mobilization in the Russian Federation on migration flows in Central Asia and the situation of migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan in Russia. The research was based on qualitative data collection through desk study, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This study focuses on migrants facing mobilization issues in the Russian Federation.

Objectives of the study:

- Analyze the impact of the war in Ukraine on migration flows in CA and the situation of migrant workers from CA in Russia;
- Analyze the peculiarities of military mobilization in Russia and its impact on migrant workers from CIS countries;
- Identify the main strategies used by Russia to recruit migrant workers to the front line;
- Assess the attitude of migrant workers to the war in Ukraine and the risks of forced recruitment to the war;
- Assess the situation of migrant workers who find themselves in war zones in Ukraine.

The total number of participants was 65 migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan in Russia.

Period of empirical data collection: April to June 2023.

Data collection tools:

1. Desk study: review of available information resources and reports on migration processes from Kyrgyzstan to Russia after the outbreak of war in Ukraine and the announcement of partial military mobilization.
2. In-depth interviews with migrant workers who were mobilized, with families of prisoners killed in the war in Ukraine and with migrants involved in labour in the occupied territories of Ukraine. A total of 15 in-depth interviews were conducted. All interviews were audio-recorded.
3. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with current migrant workers offering interviews with several informants simultaneously. The level of formalization of the discussion was semi-structured, which allowed for the development of new questions based on the responses received.

Focus groups among different groups of migrants helped to find out migrants' personal attitudes towards the war in Ukraine, the announced military mobilization in Russia and their impact on the lives of migrant workers from Central Asia in Russia. A total of 4 FGDs were conducted:

- 1 focus group in the city of Yekaterinburg with the participation of 15 migrants;
  - 3 focus groups in the city of Moscow with 35 participants;
4. Expert interviews were semi-structured discussions with questions that elicited a variety of responses. This allowed the researchers to achieve a more detailed and specific understanding of the answers to complex questions.

Expert interviews were conducted by the following researchers:

- Emilbek Kasabolotov, lawyer;
- Gulnara Derbisheva, migration expert, public figure.

# CURRENT SITUATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS FROM KYRGYZSTAN IN RUSSIA

The Russian Federation ranks first in Europe and second in the world after the United States of America in terms of the number of migrant workers. According to the Main Directorate for Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, 12.78 million migrants arrived in Russia in 2022, which was 3.5 million more than in 2021. According to the Federal State Statistics Service, the bulk of migrants are from the CIS countries.

Russia remains the most attractive country for migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan. According to estimates, up to 1 million of our compatriots may stay in Russia, which can include both citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who have dual citizenship and compatriots with an irregular legal status (illegally staying in Russia). According to statistical data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, as of 1 January 2023, the number of facts of registration of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic for migration registration is **1,184,469** (for the purpose of "work" - **978,216**; "private" - **114,889**; "study" - **38,467**). The stay of Kyrgyz citizens in Russia is regulated by the provisions of the EAEU Treaty and the Agreement between the Governments of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan "On Mutual Visa-Free Travel of Citizens". After joining the EAEU Treaty, Kyrgyz citizens have acquired a number of preferences.

The situation of law-abiding citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic can be assessed as favorable. At the same time, there are a number of difficulties, such as employment in high-paying jobs, low wages, difficulties with integration and adaptation in Russian society.

The situation of illegal migrant workers of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Russian Federation currently remains difficult. The main problems of Kyrgyz citizens in the Russian Federation include the following:

## PROCEDURE FOR MIGRATION REGISTRATION

Registration of Kyrgyz citizens in the Russian Federation continues to be one of the most difficult legalization issues. Today citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, along with foreign citizens, actually acquire (buy) registration on the "black market" and reside not at the place of registration.

As a result, they are brought to administrative responsibility.

At the same time, Russian employers, avoiding tax deductions, do not want to enter into official labour relations with citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic. Therefore, our citizens prolong their stay up to 1 year by concluding fictitious labour contracts with fictitious legal entities.

Citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who work in the territory of the Russian Federation face a number of problems even at the first stages. There are great difficulties with registration at the place of residence. Landlords, as a rule, actually provide living space, but refuse to register foreigners at their place of residence. Accordingly, "our fellow citizens are forced to look for workarounds". They use the services of various intermediaries, sometimes not even realizing that they have fictitious migration registration. "They think that everything is normal, as long as they have paid. But after some time they are taken out of the database, and they find themselves in an illegal situation". Later, this threatens them with expulsion (deportation) from the host country.

For minor and sometimes forced violations of migration laws, FCs are expelled and banned from re-entry for many years.

## Expulsion of fellow citizens with subsequent restriction of their right to enter the Russian Federation due to committing two or more minor administrative offenses.

*Reference: As a result of negotiations at the highest level in May 2022, restrictions on entry to Russia were lifted for about 47,000 citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who had committed "minor" administrative offenses. About 37,000 Kyrgyz nationals remain on the list of persons banned from entering the Russian Federation, including those expelled from Russia on the basis of decisions of Russian judicial bodies, which can only be reviewed in court if there are grounds to do so.*

## ACCESS OF FAMILY MEMBERS OF MIGRANT WORKERS TO THE MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM

*Reference: As a result of the EEC's consistent work to ensure equal rights for workers from EAEU states to receive medical care in the Russian Federation, as well as consultations with EAEU member states, the issue of migrant workers' access to the MHI system was resolved and at the end of October 2016 the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation issued an order concerning changes to the MHI rules. Since 1 January 2017, workers from EAEU countries, including citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, have had access to the MHI system in the Russian Federation.*

*However, at present, the competent authorities of the Russian Federation refuse to issue MHI policies to family members of working citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, including minor children. This circumstance significantly hampers the situation of children of Kyrgyz citizens and affects not only access to medical services, but also access to pre-school and school institutions, since admission to these institutions requires medical examinations and there should be guarantees of access to medical care.*

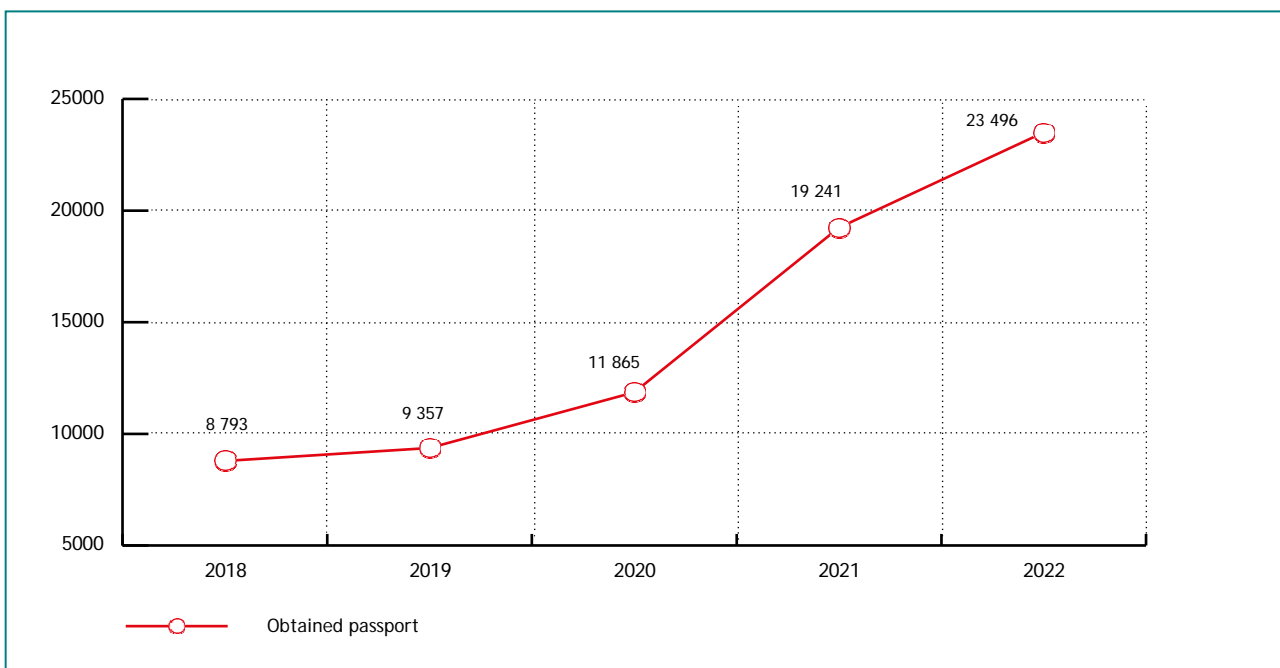
The position of the Russian side is that there is no possibility to allocate budget funds to provide family members of migrant workers with MHI. According to the legislation of the Russian Federation, the insurers for non-working citizens are the executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, therefore insurance premiums for them are paid at the expense of the budgets of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation (reference: the average amount of insurance premiums for MHI is about 10 000 rubles).

## SOCIO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND INTEGRATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS INTO THE RUSSIAN COMMUNITY

One of the pressing problems of migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan staying in Russia is their socio-cultural adaptation and integration into the Russian community. One of the pressing problems of labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan staying in Russia is their socio-cultural adaptation and integration into the Russian community. On 1 February 2023, a meeting of the working group on legal regulation of socio-cultural adaptation and integration of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons, created under the Committee on Nationality Affairs, was held in the State Duma of the Russian Federation.

The irregular nature of a significant part of migrant workers leads to a large number of crimes against migrants: many migrants are held in a situation of legalized slavery, are often not paid money for work performed, and law enforcement agencies extort bribes from them. The irregular situation of migrants makes them vulnerable and unprotected from lawlessness on the part of unscrupulous employers. Often the problem is that arrival in the country of destination is accompanied by deception by criminal employers who do not take into account the established quotas and try to use the labor of workers without registration of labour contracts. As a result, this leads to serious violations of fundamental rights, including restriction of freedom of movement, non-payment of remuneration, living in poor conditions, beatings, threats to life, humiliation, and others. The most common examples are late payment of wages or non-payment of the initially agreed upon amount.

DIAGRAM 1. DYNAMICS OF OBTAINING RUSSIAN PASSPORTS BY CITIZENS OF KYRGYZSTAN (2018-2022)



All of the above-mentioned problems have for many years forced migrant workers to give up their passports of the countries of origin and obtain Russian citizenship. Despite the war in Ukraine and the threat of being mobilized, Kyrgyz citizens continue to apply for Russian citizenship. In 2022, despite these circumstances, a record number of Kyrgyz citizens obtained a Russian passport.

# MIGRATION OUTFLOW IN RUSSIA DUE TO WAR

In 2022, there were two distinct surges of citizens leaving Russia. The first followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and involved many political activists, journalists, scientists, artists, entrepreneurs, and the Russian technical elite. The reasons for people leaving Russia varied, but most of them were caused by increased political pressure, the adoption of legislation prohibiting anti-war activities and criticism of the military and their leadership<sup>1</sup>. In addition, many feared the impact of harsh international economic sanctions (over 13,000 sanctions by mid-January 2023), as well as possible conscription and border closures. This flow also included employees of international and Russian enterprises, particularly in the IT sector, who suspended their activities in Russia and left in different directions (e.g., to the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Western Balkans, e.g., Serbia and Montenegro). A second and more noticeable surge followed the announced partial military mobilization on 21 September 2022, which resulted in male citizens potentially subject to conscription fleeing the country almost overnight, many with their entire families. Mobilization was also a major boost for those who had been hesitant to leave until then, as well as for migrant workers from Central Asia who feared conscription. In addition, other citizens, including the richest Russians, also left during the year. Given the lack of reliable and comparable data, the actual number of people who left Russia in 2022 and did not return is unknown. The available Russian data provide only a relative and presumably distorted picture<sup>2</sup>.

Nevertheless, the available data confirm a record number of over 584 thousand people, both Russian and long-term foreign residents, who left the country in January-October 2022. The majority of those who left, about 89% of people, went to EECA countries (including approximately 107 thousand to Ukraine, 85 thousand to Tajikistan, 62 thousand to Armenia, 61 thousand to Kazakhstan, 60 thousand to Kyrgyzstan, 55 thousand to Uzbekistan). For the first time in a decade, Russia's migration growth was negative compared to EECA countries, except for Tajikistan, whose inflows generally exceeded total outflows.

Between a few hundred thousand and a million Russians in 2022 are estimated to have left the country and not returned, with an average estimate of half a million. About one-third of them left in spring-summer, and two-thirds left in the fall. Large-scale out-migration is indirectly confirmed by record financial capital outflows, estimated by the Central Bank of Russia at \$251 billion in 2022 (14% of the country's GDP). In addition, Russians transferred three trillion rubles (\$42 billion) to foreign deposits in January-September 2022, compared to an annualized figure of approximately 380 billion rubles in previous years. In mid-December, the Russian Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media said that about 100,000 Russian IT specialists left and did not return in 2022. It is important to note that the increase in out-migration in 2022 is mentioned in the recent draft law on amendments to the Concept of Russia's Migration Policy for 2019-2025 (its adoption is expected in early February 2023). Among Russians departing in 2022, the most popular destinations were visa-free Georgia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Israel, UAE (visa can be obtained upon arrival) and Mongolia.

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1 E.g., Federal Law No. 32-FZ of 4 March 2022 and Federal Law No. 63-FZ of 25 March 2022 "On Amending the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and the Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation"; Federal Law No. 255-FZ of 14 July 2022 "On Controlling the Activities of Persons Under Foreign Influence", etc.

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2 Due to the specific COVID conditions that extended the period of stay of foreigners in Russia until the end of 2021, statistics recorded their outflow during the first half of 2022. In addition, the data should track the deregistration of both Russian and foreign residents who have lived in Russia for more than 9 months, but (1) many Russian citizens leave the country without deregistering and (2) the deregistration of foreigners is automatic.

Some Russians left for Egypt, India, the USA and Latin America (particularly Argentina). In the EU, the most popular destinations are the Baltic States, Finland, Greece and Bulgaria. Of the countries listed, Turkey, Serbia, Georgia and Kazakhstan are important transit countries, with the first two operating direct flights to and from Russia and the last two allowing entry by land. Kazakhstan, for example, has several checkpoints on its 7,600 km border with Russia, making it an ideal transit country on its way to the rest of Central Asia and beyond. In addition, within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, Kazakhstan, along with Armenia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, allows entry of Russian citizens with national ID cards, which is an important factor, since only 30% of the Russian population has foreign passports. In the event of an additional wave of military mobilization, we can expect another surge of departures to the same visa-free countries, unless these countries introduce visa restrictions or Russia closes its borders. Otherwise, migration from Russia is likely to continue steadily throughout 2023, presumably at a rate of about 100,000 Russian citizens per year<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The estimate is based on historical data from the Russian State Statistics Service.

# CHANGES IN MIGRATION FLOWS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Migration in Central Asia continues to be affected by pre-existing factors, especially economic vulnerability, partial unemployment of the growing and predominantly young population, proximity to Afghanistan, internal regional conflicts and climate change. In 2022, these factors have been exacerbated by the war Russia is waging in Ukraine. The resulting political and economic consequences have led to even greater uncertainty in Central Asia. In 2022, the Central Asian states experienced the largest influx of Russian migrants since their independence. Kazakhstan became one of the main destinations for Russians fleeing mobilization. It is estimated that more than 200,000 Russians, mostly young men, arrived in Kazakhstan during a two-week period in late September and early October 2022. According to Kazakhstan's Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the total number of Russian citizens reached approximately 298,000 by the end of 2022. In addition, the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan announced the country's intention to host about 250 international companies that have ceased operations in Russia, urging the government to create a favorable business environment for foreign investors. A similar trend of business relocation can be observed in Kyrgyzstan. According to some reports, more than 50 companies from Russia and Belarus are registered in the country, many of which have relocated employees and their families there, strengthening the Kyrgyz economy as a whole. For Kyrgyzstan, the increased number of arrivals from Russia has had a positive impact on the economy. Although precise data are not yet available, both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have seen an influx of Russians fleeing conscription. In Uzbekistan, this assumption is indirectly supported by data on remittances from Russia, which increased from 54.1% in the pre-war period to 80.0% in 2022. In addition, migrant workers from Central Asia are likely to face problems as the war in Ukraine continues. Outgoing labour migration and remittances are a lifeline for the population of Central Asia. As in previous years, Russia remained an important labour market for Central Asian migrants in 2022 and would likely continue to attract them in 2023.

This will be influenced by expected acute labour shortages in Russia, as well as pushing socio-economic factors in the countries of origin. At the same time, Russia's economy, which has so far withstood harsh international sanctions, is beginning to slow down. Migrants, for whom economic considerations are particularly important, may seek alternative destinations, as it is impractical to return home where jobs are scarce. This has become a serious challenge for national economies, especially Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, where remittances account for 32% and 31% of GDP, respectively, making them the fourth and fifth most dependent countries in the world on migrant remittances. The onset of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the rapid devaluation of the ruble and the fear of conscription into the Russian army motivated the departure of some Central Asian migrants, but people eventually returned in the second and third quarters of the year as Russia's economic prospects improved.

# CHANGES IN THE SITUATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN RUSSIA AFTER THE START OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND THE START OF PARTIAL MOBILIZATION IN RUSSIA

On 21 September 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree declaring partial mobilization in the Russian Federation.

During 2022, the Russian economy in connection with the start of the war against Ukraine (i.e. "Special Military Operation"), the imposition of sanctions and the announcement of partial mobilization, was shaken by changes and crisis situations, which directly affected the labour market and the situation of migrant workers. The difficult economic situation and adaptation to new conditions was accompanied in the Russian Federation by the adoption of a number of legislative changes:

- Criminal liability was introduced for evasion from military service (Part 1 of Article 328 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation);
- Providing opportunities for foreign citizens to serve (Presidential Decree of 14.11.2022 No. 823 "On Amendments to the Regulations on the Procedure for Military Service approved by Presidential Decree of 16 September 1999 No. 1237").

In order to attract foreign citizens to the military forces, Russia is creating more and more attractive conditions, especially for labour migrants, who, due to Russia's strict migration policy, are increasingly facing various barriers to labour activity.

For example, on 30 September 2022, Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 690 "On admission to Russian citizenship in a simplified manner for foreign citizens and stateless persons who have entered into contracts for military service" came into force.

According to this Decree, the following foreigners are eligible for admission to citizenship under a simplified procedure:

- those who have entered into a contract for military service for a period of at least a year and at least 6 months and have taken part in military operations. Or less than 6 months, if injured, resulting in dismissal from military service for health reasons;
- spouses, children and parents of these foreign citizens and stateless persons.

In addition, a foreign citizen has the right to obtain a temporary residence permit without a quota immediately after the conclusion of the contract, and may also qualify for a number of social benefits.

Contract servicemen are entitled to social benefits and guarantees<sup>4</sup>:

- Possibility to purchase housing at the expense of the Russian Ministry of Defense through the accumulative mortgage system (after 3 years of service);
- Service housing or compensation for rental housing;
- Free examination, treatment and rehabilitation in military medical institutions;
- Life and health insurance at the expense of the federal budget;
- Right to a pension after 20 years of service;
- Two-week paid vacation at least once every 6 months.

Additional social benefits and guarantees are provided for participants of the "special military operation":

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Contract Service, <https://xn--80aabtwbuhbiqdxddn.xn--p1ai/>



- Combat veteran status and related benefits;
- Credit and tax holiday;
- Job reservation;
- Budget places for children to study at universities;
- Free vacation for children in summer health camps;
- Unified additional payments, benefits and guarantees of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation).

When concluding a contract for military service, signed no earlier than 21 September 2022 and for a period of at least a year, a lump-sum payment of 195 thousand rubles is available.

Contract servicemen who are in the zone of "a special military operation" receive money allowance in accordance with their military rank and position. For example, the minimum monthly allowance for a private in the special military operation zone is 204,000 rubles; for a squad commander - 232,000 rubles; for a deputy platoon commander - 242,000 rubles.

On 15 May 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on a simplified procedure for granting Russian citizenship to foreigners who have entered into a contract with the Russian Ministry of Defense and are fighting on the territory of Ukraine. As follows from the text of the document, foreigners and stateless persons who have entered into a contract for military service for one year during the hostilities in Ukraine will be able to apply for citizenship in a simplified procedure. A simplified procedure for obtaining citizenship for family members is also introduced.

With this decree, Putin amended his second decree of 30 September 2022 "On the simplified procedure for the admission of foreign citizens and stateless persons in military service under contract". This document stipulated that Russian passports would be issued in a simplified procedure to foreigners who signed a military service contract of at least one year, if they participated in combat operations for at least six months.

The new wording of the decree does not mention direct participation in combat operations: only the one-year term for which the contract must be signed remains unchanged.

At the same time, the Multifunctional Migration Center "Sakharovo" hosted a recruitment office of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation. Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyenin noted that the Multifunctional Migration Center is a full-fledged infrastructure to assist the Russian Ministry of Defense in organizing the enlistment of foreign citizens for military service.

Propaganda materials in Russian, Tajik, Uzbek and Kyrgyz languages were placed in the MMC, and teams of specialists were engaged to provide more detailed explanations on recruitment for contract service in the armed forces of the Russian Federation. According to media reports, employees of the migration center "are forced to offer migrants contract service in the Russian army".

*The Sakharovo MMC (Multifunctional Migration Center or simply Migration Center) is a place where foreign citizens can go to obtain the necessary documents to legally work and live in the Russian Federation.*

In addition, announcements about the possibility of service by foreign nationals were broadcast in various languages on public transportation in Moscow. The stated amount of the monthly contract is 192,000 rubles.

In addition to offers of official service in the armed forces of the Russian Federation, the activities of private military companies were also actively advertised on social networks. Among migrant groups, calls to join the private military companies "Wagner", "Novorossiya" and "Patriot" were disseminated. Contracted service in private military companies was often better paid (for example, PMC Wagner claimed a salary of 240,000 rubles per month).

In connection with the announcement of partial mobilization, the most difficult situation is with the citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who also have citizenship of the Russian Federation and are subject to mobilization. The number of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who have taken Russian citizenship from 1992 to date is 613,245 persons<sup>5</sup>. According to expert estimates, about 300,000 citizens out of this number did not formalize their renunciation of citizenship of the Kyrgyz Republic. Based on average statistics, about one third or about 100,000 citizens with citizenship of two countries may fall under the criteria of partial mobilization.

According to the law<sup>6</sup>, a citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic may accept citizenship of another foreign state while remaining a citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic. The KR legislation does not prohibit other citizenship with non-defined states. According to Article 6 of the Law of the KR "On Citizenship of the KR", a citizen of the KR who also has another citizenship is considered by the KR only as a citizen of the KR. Acquisition of other citizenship by a citizen of the KR does not entail termination of citizenship of the KR.

5 According to the data of the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2022

6 Art.22 p.3 of the Law of the KYRGYZ REPUBLIC No. 70 of 21 May 2007 "On Citizenship of the Kyrgyz Republic"

Moreover, Article 7 of this Law states that citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who are outside the Kyrgyz Republic are granted protection of their rights, freedoms and legal interests through diplomatic missions and consular offices of the Kyrgyz Republic.

In this case, citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic with Russian citizenship are subject to mobilization and are obliged to perform military service in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation. Evasion from the mobilization process entails criminal liability established by Russian law in accordance with Article 328 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation - on evasion from military service, the punishment for which is up to 10 years of imprisonment.

Kyrgyz citizens temporarily staying in the Russian Federation may not participate in armed conflicts on the territory of foreign countries. In accordance with Articles 256 and 416 of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, participation of Kyrgyz citizens in hostilities in the territory of foreign countries is punishable by imprisonment for up to ten years with confiscation of property.

This results in the following situation:

In cases where citizens submit to partial mobilization, they will probably be prosecuted on the territory of their country of origin. In case of refusal and return to their home country, they will be criminally liable on the territory of the Russian Federation.

However, this situation applies only to citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who have citizenship of the Russian Federation. Citizens who do not have citizenship of the Russian Federation will be held criminally liable for mercenarism. These citizens, despite the voluntary nature of contract service in the armed forces of the Russian Federation, are actually hostages of the situation. If they apply to state bodies or diplomatic institutions of the country of origin, they automatically become criminals.

For example, on 16 May 2023, Pervomaisky District Court of Bishkek sentenced a 31-year-old Kyrgyz man to 10 years in prison for participation in an armed conflict of other states for remuneration, or mercenarism (Part 2 of Article 416 of the Criminal Code).<sup>7</sup>

According to the investigation, in June 2022, a native of At-Bashy district of Naryn region, who was in Moscow, decided to join the ranks of armed groups of the so-called "LNR" to participate in the war in Ukraine. In July, he arrived in the city of Bryanka and was enrolled in military service with a salary of 180,000 rubles per month.

*After enlisting, he reportedly took part in reconnaissance operations, completed combat training courses, and was involved in providing mortars and ammunition on the front line. He was dismissed from military service in November, returning first to Moscow and then to Bishkek. The accused himself did not admit guilt in court. According to him, he enlisted in order to obtain a Russian passport.*

To date, civil activists have been actively urging migrant workers with dual citizenship, who could potentially be included in mobilization lists, to leave the territory of Russia. Now, after President Vladimir Putin signed a bill on 14 April 2023, equating electronic summonses with paper summonses and banning exit for those who are considered to have been notified of the draft, migrant workers with Russian passports have more and more chances to find themselves on the battlefield.

The law introduces penalties for draft dodgers - if a person subject to conscription fails to appear at a military enlistment office within 20 days, he or she may be deprived of the right to drive a car, register real estate, and take out loans. Those who have received a summons are prohibited from leaving Russia.

Military enlistment offices will be able to send summonses in several ways: not only in person, but also via State Services and by registered mail. Electronic summonses will be considered received from the moment the document is placed in the citizen's account, postal summonses - from the moment they are sent. All summonses will be entered into a single register - seven days after a person appears on the list as a recipient of a document, he will be considered notified, and will be obliged to appear at the military enlistment office. This does not depend on whether he actually received the summons or not.

*The Federal State Information System "Unified Portal of State and Municipal Services" is a reference and information Internet portal. It provides access of individuals and legal entities to information on state and municipal services in the Russian Federation - Russia, state functions of control and supervision, on services of state and municipal institutions, on services of organizations involved in the provision of state and municipal services, as well as electronic delivery of state and municipal services.*

In addition, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed amendments to the Law "On the Procedure for Departure from and Entry into the Russian Federation"<sup>8</sup>. The document was officially published on the legal information portal. These amendments stipulate that those called up for military or alternative civilian service will have to deposit their foreign passports with the migration department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the MMC. The passport must be handed in within five days of being drafted. It will be returned after completion of service.

If a Russian whose right to leave the country is restricted fails to deposit his or her passport without a valid reason, the document will be recognized as invalid. The amendments were introduced in the State Duma of the Russian Federation in August 2021. The first reading of the bill took place two months later. However, deputies adopted the document in the second and third readings only in May 2023. On 7 June, it was approved by the Federation Council. The law on the surrender of passports will come into force in 180 days. That is, this law has sharply limited the possibility to avoid participation in the war of citizens who have fallen under military mobilization. Migrant workers who have received a Russian passport are also included in this category.

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8 Federal Law of 13.06.2023 No. 212-FZ "On Amendments to the Federal Law "On the Procedure for Departure from and Entry into the Russian Federation". <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202306130016>

# RECRUITING PRISONERS AND MIGRANT WORKERS FROM KYRGYZSTAN FOR MILITARY SERVICE

Fact: citizens of Central Asian countries are actively involved in the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Migrants living in Russia, both those who have Russian passports and those who do not, as the media have repeatedly reported, are being sought to be mobilized for the war in Ukraine. Immediately after the announcement of partial military mobilization in Russia, migrant online chat rooms, forums, and groups were flooded with advertisements with tempting offers of contract service in the Russian Armed Forces.

Information about the recruitment of foreigners to the front also came from Russian colonies, where Kazakh, Tajik, Kyrgyz and other foreign nationals are imprisoned. At the same time, the recruitment of citizens of other states goes not only to the Russian standing army, but also to private military companies and many other military groups.

One of the most famous PMCs recruiting mercenaries in Russia is the Wagner Group (PMC Wagner). The Wagner Group (official name of PMC Wagner) first showed itself in 2014, when it supported pro-Russian separatist forces in eastern Ukraine<sup>9</sup>. At the time, it was a secret organization operating mainly in Africa and the Middle East, and is believed to have only about 5,000 fighters - mostly veterans of Russia's elite regiments and special operations forces.

It has grown significantly since then. According to the British Ministry of Defense's foreign intelligence service, the Wagner Group has more than 50,000 fighters in its ranks.

PMC Wagner began actively seeking recruits at the beginning of hostilities in Ukraine because of the significant human losses of the Russian regular army. In the first months, announcements were published in social networks and closed chat rooms.

Now the PMC Wagner finally comes out of the shadows and openly recruits people throughout Russia. Representatives of PMC Wagner publish contact details of recruitment centers for mercenaries, are engaged in military training of civilians and creation of infrastructure. Calls to join the ranks of mercenaries appear on city posters in Russia. Open sources say that Wagner Group recruitment centers are already active in 42 Russian cities. On its pages in Russian social networks PMC publishes contact information of recruitment centers.

## RECRUITMENT OF PRISONERS

According to U.S. National Security Council, about 80 percent of its troops in Ukraine were recruited from Russian prisons. Although mercenaries are banned in Russia, Wagner Group officially registered as a company in 2022 and opened a new headquarters in St. Petersburg, Russia.

PMC Wagner openly recruits for contract service in Russian cities (city billboards are used).

<sup>9</sup> According to the BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60947877>



FIGURE 1. ADVERTISING MAILINGS IN ONLINE GROUPS OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN RUSSIA

### SIMPLIFIED ACQUISITION OF RUSSIAN CITIZENSHIP

Contract serviceman and his family members (spouse, children and parents obtain Russian citizenship)

FIGURE 2. ADVERTISING MAILINGS IN ONLINE GROUPS OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN RUSSIA

### IN CASE OF WOUNDING

-  500,000 in case of wounding, contusion, injury of light and medium severity
-  1,000,000 in case of wounding, trauma, contusion of severe degree

### IN CASE OF DEATH


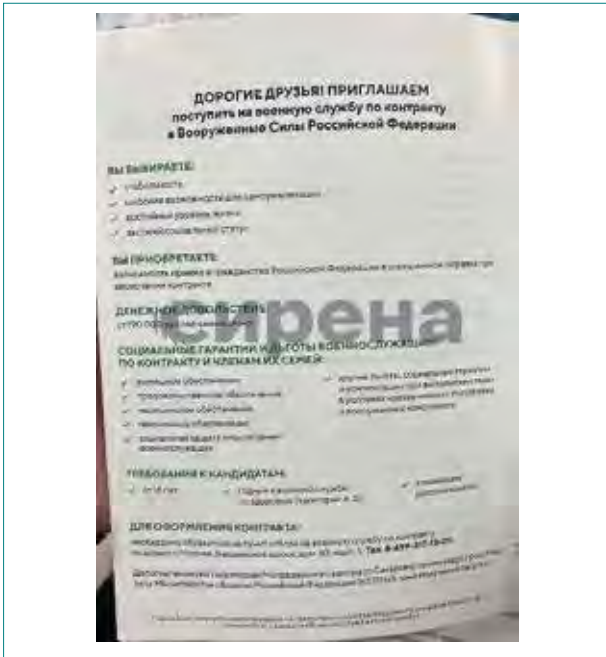
-  3,000,000 to family members

FIGURE 3. CALLS TO JOIN THE RUSSIAN MILITARY FORCES, WHICH ARE GIVEN OUT AT THE SAKHAROVO MULTIFUNCTIONAL MIGRATION CENTER



Russian media refer to it as a patriotic organization. The Wagner Group has free access to correctional facilities across the country to conduct recruitment campaigns. A series of videos leaked by correctional officers themselves indicate that the Wagner group is purposefully recruiting inmates who have committed a number of serious and particularly serious offenses.

Often the facts of Central Asians taking part in the war in Ukraine became known after their deaths. According to the Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of February 2023, 1,282 Kyrgyz citizens are serving sentences abroad, of whom 1,077 are in Russian prisons. Most of the Central Asian citizens serving sentences in correctional facilities in Russia are recruited through PMC Wagner.

According to a BBC investigation, at least 93 people from Central Asian countries have died in Russia's war with Ukraine: 19 from Kyrgyzstan, 34 from Uzbekistan and 40 from Tajikistan<sup>10</sup>.

As of May 2023, the media knew about at least 8 citizens of Kyrgyzstan who died in the war while being in the ranks of PMC Wagner. They were serving prison sentences in Russia.

- On 27 January, the media reported about the death of a Kyrgyz citizen - Ayan Alisherov. On 4 November 2022, he died in the city of Artemovsk (Bakhmut) in Donetsk region (Ukrainian region occupied by the Russian military). Alisherov, aged 30, was serving his sentence in a colony in the Republic of Mordovia, which is part of Russia.
- On 1 February, the media published information about another resident of Uzgen district, Yangibai Rakhimov, who was imprisoned in Russia. It is reported that in the Ukrainian town of Bakhmut, where fierce battles with the Russian army were taking place, on 9 December 2022, a Kyrgyz citizen - Yangibai Rakhimov died. He was buried in his small homeland on 23 January 2023.
- On 15 February, it became known about the death of another Kyrgyz citizen of Leilek district - Zamir Choleev. According to his relatives, he went to war through the PMC Wagner.
- In May, it became known about the death of a Kyrgyz citizen Aktilek Kadyrov, in the Ukrainian town of Bakhmut, where fierce fighting was taking place. He was also serving a sentence in a Russian colony.
- On 11 May, it became known about the death of a Kyrgyz citizen - Chyngyz Izabekov. He went to war in the ranks of the private military company Wagner in October-November 2022.
- Akzhol (name changed), a native of Kara-Suu district of Osh region of the Kyrgyz Republic, was 28 years old. His relatives learned about the incident on 13 May. They asked not to disclose his real name. The death notice says that he died back in March. This happened in the Ukrainian town of Bakhmut, where fierce fighting had been going on for several months already.
- Bekzat Rysbaev, a resident of Nookat district of Osh region, whose body was also brought from Ukraine, was buried in his homeland in 2022, but it became known only now. As it turned out, the 40-year-old Kyrgyz citizen was also one of the first prisoners in Russian penitentiaries who joined the PMC Wagner in October-November 2022.

There is no data on those Kyrgyz prisoners who survived and received citizenship and other privileges offered by PMC Wagner in open sources. It can be unequivocally stated that relatives of the above-mentioned prisoners who died during military operations have not received any promised compensation or privileges to date.

10 BBC investigation data: [https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/ce417zgy2g5o?ocid=wsrussian.social.in-app-messaging.telegram.russiantelegram\\_.edit](https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/ce417zgy2g5o?ocid=wsrussian.social.in-app-messaging.telegram.russiantelegram_.edit)

These are only the facts that are known in the media. In fact, the number of Kyrgyz prisoners who died in Ukraine may be even higher. Our research team managed to identify one more native of Leilek district of Batken region - Islomzhon Begotanov, who died in Bakhmut. He went to the war in Ukraine in the ranks of the Wagner group, while imprisoned in Correctional Colony No. 4 in the Orenburg region.

## MISSING PERSON

*Islomzhon Begotaev, born in 1988 in Razzakov town, Batken region, after graduating from Isfana secondary school and obtaining qualification as a driver at the local vocational lyceum, went for labour migration in 2006. According to his mother, this was a forced measure due to the lack of labour prospects in his home country. Labour migration was not easy for him - he worked as a waiter, courier, and construction worker. Due to difficulties with legalization of documents, he obtained Russian citizenship in 2011. According to his mother Ruzikhon Begotaeva, he was slipped drugs during another courier delivery and was imprisoned for 16 years. He was imprisoned at Correctional Colony No. 4 in Orenburg. According to relatives, Islomzhon was allegedly recruited in early January 2023. Having undergone urgent military training in Molmino, where the military base of PMC Wagner is located, he was further sent to the combat zone in the town of Bakhmut.*

*They gave us the phone number of one person who was supposedly in the know. We urgently called this number..... From there we were informed that Islomzhon died in Ukraine on 18 January 2023".*

*Islomzhon Begotaev was buried near the city of Krasnodar in the village of Bakinskaya in a special cemetery where only Wagnerites are buried. The cemetery is located 40 kilometers from the military base of PMC Wagner, on the farm Molmino in Krasnodar Krai.*

*The news of the death of Islomzhon, who was only 35 years old, came as a great shock to the family. He left behind a wife and four children.*

*I don't believe my son went to war of his own free will. My son was never in the army. He has never held a gun in his life. He would have told us something if he was going to Ukraine. I'm sure he was forced to do it. And most importantly, we didn't know he was gone for three months. Three months! How can a person just disappear from the colony and die?!".*

*The eldest son of Ruzakhan Begotaeva traveled to Russia to visit his brother's burial place and say a prayer for his brother. Posthumously, Islomzhon Begotaev was given the order "for bravery" by PMC Wagner, but this did not provide for any benefits or allowances, since legally - prisoners cannot be war veterans.*

*To date, the family of Islomzhon Begotaev has not received any compensation or payments in connection with his death.*

*The last time I spoke to my son was 30 December 2022. He wished us a happy new year as usual, talked to his wife and children. Said he was doing well and asked me not to worry. He didn't say anything about going to war.*

*After that, he did not contact us for 3 whole months. This was unusual, usually he himself called periodically.*

*And then there was no news from him, not a call. After all, it's a colony, maybe there were some checks. But I had a bad feeling. I was very worried about him. I asked my eldest son to contact the colony leadership to find out if everything was okay with my son. In April, when we called the administration, we were told he had gone to war in Ukraine.*

*I don't need any compensation. I just wanted my son to be alive. Even if he remained crippled. Poor son! After so many years of slave labour in a foreign country, he gained nothing. He couldn't even buy land. And then he was used and killed. My eldest son promised to take care of his children.*

*The prison staff later gave us his personal belongings - just photos of his children. He is lying there in the cold ground, alone. We're not around. Who will come to pray at his grave? They didn't even return my son's body to me," cries Ruzakhan Begotayeva.*

This trend raises concerns among family members of imprisoned Kyrgyz citizens in Russia, who have not for the first time raised the issue of extradition of Kyrgyz prisoners to Kyrgyzstan. However, their requests have been lying in the archives of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs for years without a response. In our opinion, the mobilization of imprisoned migrants is carried out with significant violations of human rights. Relatives of mobilized migrants note facts of forced signing of contracts with PMCs. The following questions remain open: how the mobilization of imprisoned migrants to PMCs is carried out, whether they are informed about the penalties for participation in hostilities on the territory of foreign countries, whether they, being isolated from information about the real state of affairs at the front, can fully assess the risks of involvement in the war in Ukraine.

#### **Involvement of foreigners in the war through Russia's budget organizations, where migrant workers are mostly employed.**

The Russian Ministry of Defense is looking for contract workers to be sent to Ukraine through the Moscow State Budgetary Institution "Zhilishchnik". They post vacancies for "security guards" with salaries of up to 240,000 rubles. An activist of the Migrant Trade Union drew attention to the advertisements for "security guards" placed by some Moscow State Budgetary Institutions "Zhilishchnik" engaged in the maintenance of residential buildings. Such vacancies, in particular, were published by "Zhilishchnik" of Kuzminki and Ryazan district.

"Security guards" are promised a salary of 170,000-240,000 rubles, combat veteran status, benefits, payments for children and "retention of the main job for two years". At the same time, work experience is not required, but it is stated that it will be necessary to undergo training "for up to 2 months".

"Zhilishchnik" of the Kuzminki district indicates that the vacancy is related to the "Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation".

The research team called the phone number indicated in the advertisements (it was the same for the "security guard" vacancies). The person who answered the phone explained that "this meant signing a contract for military service, this was work in a special operation zone".

"The contract will be signed with the Ministry of Defense, just for an additional payment from the city of Moscow you are employed by the SBI "Zhilishchnik". You go as if from the organization," he said.

When asked why the word "security guard" was listed in the vacancy, the interlocutor on the other end of the phone said: "Because such vacancies cannot be advertised by an organization that is not related to the Ministry of Defense".

Migrant workers and citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic with Russian passports are recruited for war in budget institutions, schools and even kindergartens.

In Russia, a large-scale advertising campaign has been launched in all regions of the country. More than 75,000 advertisements calling to go to the front were found in Telegram and V Kontakte alone.

According to calculations by Meduza, almost 90% of all announcements are advertisements for contracts with the Ministry of Defense, another two and a half thousand are posts about the search for volunteers and recruitment to the PMC Wagner.

FIGURE 4. PROPAGANDA POSTERS OF CONTRACT SERVICE IN THE RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES IN THE MOSCOW METRO



FIGURE 5. MOBILE PROPAGANDA STATIONS FOR CONTRACT SERVICE IN THE RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES



It is important to pay attention to the fact that the most popular advertising slogans were “Contract service is the choice of real men!”, “Military service - stability and confidence in life!” and “Your country needs you!”

Our respondents and activists among migrant workers note that the authorities have used all administrative resources to recruit Russians. In particular, at least 19,000 announcements about contract military service appeared in the accounts of regional authorities, and almost 4,000 more - on the messenger pages of budgetary institutions and educational institutions, including schools and kindergartens. In the latter, potential volunteers are lured with various benefits for children - budget places in universities and trips to children's camps.

Such advertisements appear in the entrances of residential buildings, on bus stops and billboards. Schools hold thematic events for high school students. They are persuaded to sign a contract immediately after graduation. Moreover, in early April, the government of the Kaliningrad region announced plans to “inform” residents about the contract service by telephone.

In such large cities as Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Yekaterinburg, mobile campaign stations appeared, and employment centers began to actively offer unemployed people to sign a contract with the Ministry of Defense.

A similar event under the motto “I believe in myself, I think about the future, I serve Russia!” was held in the village of Yar-Sale, Yamalo-Nenets District, on 27 March 2023. Polyclinics in Khimki joined the campaign, promising full diagnostics in one day for those entering military service.



# MIGRANT WORKERS INVOLVED IN RECOVERY AND OTHER TYPES OF WORK ON THE FRONT LINE

On 21 February 2022, Russia recognized the independence of the DPR and LPR, and on 24 February, started a war in Ukraine. During the war, Russian troops took control of a significant territory of Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, where military-civil administrations (MCAs) were established.

On 23-27 September, referendums were held in the DPR, LPR, Zaporozhye and Kherson regions on joining Russia as its constituent entities. And on 30 September 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin and the heads of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, Zaporozhye and Kherson regions signed agreements on the inclusion of these regions into Russia.

According to these agreements, a transition period has been established until 1 January 2026, during which the new regions should be integrated into the economic, financial, credit and legal systems of the Russian Federation, as well as into the system of state authorities. In 2022 and 2023, a number of federal laws were adopted to integrate the new regions.

One of the key stages of integration is the restoration of destroyed infrastructure in the occupied territories. The Russian government has prepared a plan to rebuild 6,200 facilities in the new territories - in the DPR, LPR, Zaporozhye and Kherson - within three years.

To implement a restoration project of this scale, labour forces from Central Asia are being actively involved.

Immediately after the start of hostilities in Ukraine, announcements of recruitment of migrant workers for recovery operations in the occupied territories of Ukraine appeared in the Russian social space and labour market.

According to the PF "Insan-Leylek", thousands of migrant workers, facing unemployment and reduced earnings after the international sanctions against Russia, left for recovery operations in the occupied territories of Ukraine through Russian construction companies and private employment agencies.

Due to their unregulated migration status, the situation of migrant workers who left Russia for Ukraine for work is complicated by the fact that they may not be allowed back into Russian territory.

According to human rights organizations in Moscow and the media<sup>11</sup>, after the completion of construction works, on their way back to Russia, some migrants could not cross the border of the Russian Federation because they were on the lists of persons whose entry to the Russian Federation was restricted, i.e. they were on the "black list". As a result, these persons cannot return to Russia, as they are not allowed at the border, and also to their homeland, since there are no direct routes of communication between the Kyrgyz Republic and the occupied territories of Ukraine.

The labour shortage is so high that recruitment for jobs is conducted not only among current migrants in Russia, but also directly in Central Asian countries. In online advertising publications of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan last fall there were advertisements for recruitment of construction workers for construction work in Mariupol with rather tempting working conditions: payment of more than one hundred thousand rubles per month, with free meals and accommodation. The transit of these workers to Ukraine is carried out through the borders of Russia.

This is further complicated by the fact that migrant workers who find themselves on Ukrainian territory are, according to Ukrainian law, criminals, whether or not they participated in hostilities. Foreigners can enter Ukraine and the temporarily occupied territories only with the permission of the Ukrainian authorities and through checkpoints. Entry through other places is illegal - such citizens are considered accomplices of the occupants.

In addition, CA citizens are involved not only in recovery operations in the occupied territories of Ukraine, but also in various types of work on the front line - digging trenches and dugouts, burying the bodies of deceased military personnel.

11 Investigation by Radio Azattyk: <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/32291350.html>

FIGURE 7. ADVERTISING MAILINGS AMONG MIGRANT WORKERS CALLING FOR WORK IN THE DEFENSIVE TERRITORIES OF UKRAINE OCCUPIED BY RUSSIA

88 дн. - 11.12

Вахта в России. Мариуполь.  
**700 000 до 950 000 тг.**

Бизнес

700 000 до 950 000 тг. ежемесячно нетто

Полная занятость

Вахтовый метод

Алматы, Алмалинский район

Название компании: Рекадро.кз

Рабочий адрес: Жыбек жолы

**Описание**

Вахта в России. Мариуполь

Бетонщики [с опытом по монолиту]- 110 000 р

Кровельщики - 110 000 р

Каменщики - 110 000 р.

Плотники -105 000 р.

Монтажники С и ЖБК - 115 000 р

Слесарь санитарно-технических систем - 110 000 р.

Сантехник (монтажник сантехнических систем) - 110 000 р.

Монтажник на фасады - 115 000 р.

Монтажник окон - 120 000 руб.

Электромонтажники - 115000 руб

Изолировщики - 115 000 руб.

Питание в столовой, организовано халяльное питание, проживание в благоустроенных вагончиках

Билеты авиа и ж/д из любого города России -за счёт компании. До России за свой счет.

P.S.: Есть фото, видео по объекту Мариуполь, от уже работающих казахстанцев.

По всем вопросам писать/звонить по номеру: 8 \*\*\*\*\* 96 (с 9:00 до 19:00 чч)

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Вахта - Восстановление Мариуполя / работа вахтой в России

900 000 Тнг.

Предложить свою цену

Написать

Контакты

По госпрограмме, в крупную компанию, требуются рабочие строительных специальностей на восстановление Мариуполя. Заработная плата от 100000 рублей в месяц. Информация для желающих принять участие в восстановление города: Ближайший вылет 15.12.2022. Мариуполь - ранее город Украины в Донецкой области, документально, считается Российским, уже активно ведутся восстановительные работы - боевые действия завершены. Работают ребята со всего СНГ, в том числе из Казахстана. Есть фото и видео от ребят с объекта. Работодатель предоставляет: - авиаперелет; - горячее трёхразовое питание; - проживание; - официальное трудоустройство; - выплаты на карту, без задержек; - специальную одежду. График работы: 60/30 (два месяца работы, тридцать дней отдыха). Услуги оказывает профессиональное агентство по трудоустройству. Звонки и заявки на консультацию принимаются с понедельника по пятницу с 10: 00 до 19: 00, с 12: 00 до 14: 00 обеденный перерыв. Рассматриваются кандидаты со всех регионов.

По госпрограмме, в крупную компанию, требуются рабочие строительных специальностей на восстановление Мариуполя. Заработная плата от 100000 рублей в месяц. Информация для желающих принять участие в восстановление города: Ближайший вылет 15.12.2022. Мариуполь - ранее город Украины в Донецкой области, документально, считается Российским, уже активно ведутся восстановительные работы - боевые действия

Дополнительные характеристики:

Заработная плата: 700 000 - 900 000 Т/за месяц

Тип занятости: Полная занятость

График работы: Вахтовый метод

Название компании: «Север» агентство по трудоустройству

Рабочий адрес: г. Костанай, ул. Карбышева 2

Пользователь: Консультант Руслан

FIGURE 7. VKONTAKTE PROMOTIONAL MAILINGS AMONG MIGRANT WORKERS CALLING FOR WORK IN RUSSIAN-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES TO STRENGTHEN DEFENSE POINTS



For example, such advertisements appeared in large Russian job search services such as HeadHunter, Avito, SuperJob and Telegram and WhatsApp channels of migrants in Russian, Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek languages. It was proposed to dig trenches in the occupied Lugansk and Zaporozhye regions of Ukraine and in the border Belgorod region of Russia<sup>12</sup>. Payment varies from 45,000 to 180,000 rubles per month or from 300 rubles (\$4) per hour. Travel, medical examination, accommodation, three meals a day, and special clothing are also offered free of charge. Requirements: good health and age from 20 to 50 years. Unfortunately, by agreeing to such work, migrant workers risk their lives. In addition to the danger of dying from shelling from Ukraine, workers also face other troubles: unsanitary conditions, unheated living quarters, lack of labour safety standards, non-payment of wages and the risk of becoming a victim of forced labour.

After the start of the first, so-called "partial mobilization", on the recommendation of the lawyers of the Migrants Trade Union, in October 2022, I urgently left Russia across the Kazakh border. There were already "mobilization lists" at the airports; I could not fly through Domodedovo airport. At our own peril and risk, my 4 friends and I, having bribed the border guards on the border territory of Kazakhstan and Russia, returned to Kyrgyzstan.

For a month my friends and I couldn't find a job. In December 2023, through the Center for Employment of Citizens Abroad in Bishkek, I got a job in the UK, picking strawberries, apples, and cabbage. To be honest, I didn't like it there. It rains constantly, I don't know English, we live in a carriage far away from the city in a migrant community. In January 2023, my friends and I, with whom we returned from Russia, decided to go to Mariupol for construction work. We are here now. Shots are heard somewhere far away.

But we are paid well. There are many Kyrgyzstanis here and many more newcomers arriving every day. We live for the moment. I'm afraid to die. But it's better here at a construction site than in the war near Bakhmut. My friend recently died there. His relatives buried him".

.....  
NURBEK

12 <https://kloop.kg/blog/2023/03/02/tyurma-i-smert-za-kopejki-migrantov-zovut-ryt-okopy-dlya-rossijskoj-armii/>

# RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF MIGRANT WORKERS

## GENERAL INFORMATION ON RESPONDENTS

The total number of respondents who took part in this research amounted to 65 respondents (15 participated in the in-depth interview and 50 in the FGD). 43 of them were on the territory of Russia, 7 respondents were in the occupied territories of Russia (LPR and DPR) and 10 respondents were in Kyrgyzstan during the research period.

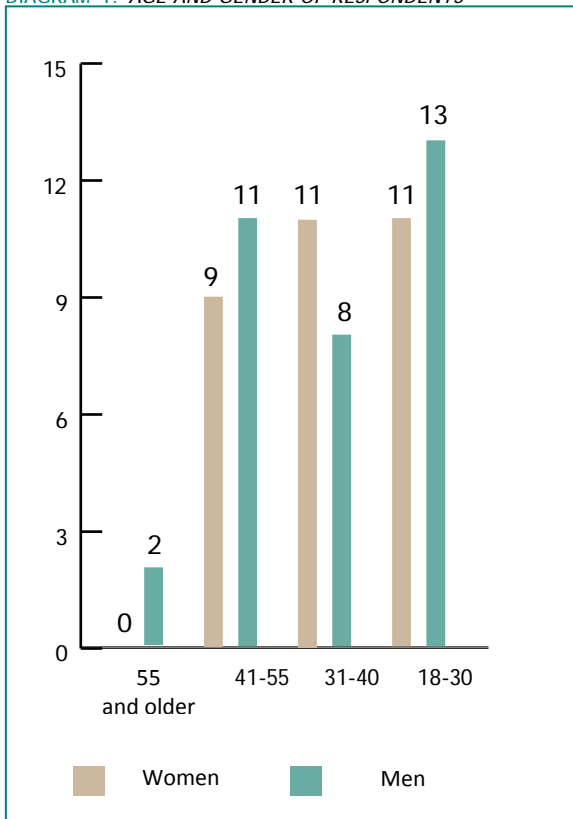
## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 46% females and 54% males participated in this study. The average age of respondents was 33 years.

The survey was dominated by young people, mostly between 18 and 40 years old (43 persons)<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> According to WHO definition, youth are people from 18 to 40 years of age.

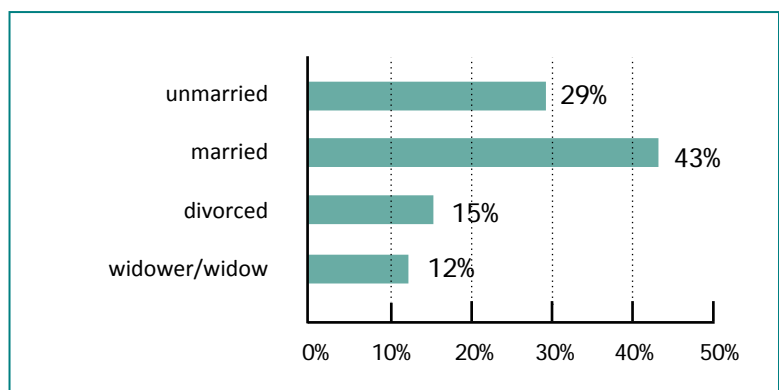
DIAGRAM 1. AGE AND GENDER OF RESPONDENTS



The average age of respondents was 33 years. This suggests that this study represents mainly the opinion of young migrant workers with an average experience of 5 years and fit for military service and active work.

Most of them (43%) have family relations, of which 33% left for Russia together with their families. Every year the number of migrants leaving with their families increases. Migrants plan their future in Russia - permanent residence, education and further development. In this regard, migrants are increasingly acquiring citizenship of the Russian Federation, despite the fact that Russia's migration policy has undergone many changes, becoming tougher every year. And having Russian citizenship will make a migrant's stay much easier, improving access to social and medical services, which are so necessary when a person lives there with a family. It was expected that after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, the imposition of a series of economic sanctions against Russia and the announcement of partial military mobilization, the number of people wishing to obtain Russian citizenship would decrease. But this did not happen. Russia still remains the most attractive country for migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, in 2022 the number of those who received Russian citizenship from Kyrgyzstan amounted to a record number, passing over 23,000 people.

DIAGRAM 2. MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS



*My husband and I came to Russia right after we got married. It is like a tradition for our region (Karasuu district of Osh region). Everyone goes to Russia after the wedding. So we did. We have no other opportunities in our homeland. Acquaintances are needed everywhere, bribes must be given. Neither my family nor my husband's family had any money. Moreover, my husband has three younger brothers. Our family would not fit in one small house. We received citizenship back in 2018. We have two kids. They had to be sent to school and registered at the clinic. And I'm tired of spending money on fake registrations. Having citizenship has made it much easier for us. You stop living in fear. (Russians) treat you better".*

.....  
FGD PARTICIPANT, AZIZA, 28 YEARS OLD

When asked why Kyrgyzstanis continue to obtain Russian citizenship, participants indicated two main reasons:

The first is migrant workers who want to get rid of the red tape involved in processing migration documents. Today, on average, a Kyrgyz migrant spends up to 40,000 rubles (more than \$500) to legally live and work in Russia. Other arguments include that a Russian passport supposedly frees the migrant from discrimination by Russian law enforcement agencies.

The second group is those who wish to improve their socio-economic situation. These people mainly obtain Russian citizenship through the "return of compatriots" program<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> The program to assist the voluntary resettlement of compatriots living abroad to the Russian Federation was adopted by decree of the President of the Russian Federation on 22 June 2006.

The program is aimed at relocating people who found themselves outside the Russian Federation after the collapse of the USSR and who want to move to Russia. If a participant in the resettlement program has moved to a region that is not a priority settlement area, he is entitled to only 20,000 rubles of "relocation allowance" and 10,000 rubles for each family member - the money will be issued in a lump sum after registration at the place of stay or residence.

## IMPACT OF THE OUTBREAK OF WAR IN UKRAINE ON THE LIVES OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN RUSSIA

According to the respondents' answers, the war in Ukraine has generally had a negative impact on the lives of our compatriots. First of all, the economic sanctions that were subsequently imposed on Russia worsened the situation of migrants. The spheres of activity where migrants are most employed were affected. For example, construction, food delivery, catering and service industries.

69% of respondents claim that they do not have an employment contract. And 32% of the participants answered that their wages are delayed on a regular basis. Every second migrant without an employment contract faces non-payment of wages, unlike those who have one. Migrants who work on the basis of a employment contract are much less likely to face the problem of non-payment for work. (1:7)<sup>15</sup>

But despite the negative impact of sanctions, remittances from Russia to Kyrgyzstan have not decreased. According to the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic, in 2022, the volume of remittances exceeded \$2.7 billion, while in 2021 the inflows amounted to \$2.5 billion. This is due to rising oil prices and increased demand for migrant workers, which provided an increase in the flow of remittances from Russia to Central Asian countries. Strengthening of the ruble against the US dollar led to an increase in the dollar value of outgoing remittances from Russia to Central Asian countries.

The World Bank forecasts a further slowdown in incoming remittance growth to 4.2% in 2023, due to a less favorable economic outlook in Russia<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Research of PF "Insan-Leylek", Impact of economic sanctions against the Russian Federation on the labour rights of migrants from Kyrgyzstan, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> According to the World Bank's Migration and Development Analytical Review 2022. <https://www.knomad.org/publication/migration-and-development-brief-37>

*After the war started in Ukraine, there were sanctions. Because of these sanctions, the store where I worked closed down. We were sent on leave without pay.*

*There was no work, food started to become more expensive. Just at that time it was unclear how events would develop. After losing my job, I went on temporary part-time jobs in different places for a long time. The ruble fell a lot. The money I earned was not enough for anything. But we somehow survived these times".*

MEERIM, 35 YEARS OLD

8% of the respondents took advantage of other employment opportunities created by the government in far off countries such as UK, South Korea, Turkey, Germany, UAE, Qatar, etc.

*After the news appeared on the Internet that Kyrgyz people can go to England to work, my wife and I were immediately interested.*

*We have already been working in Russia for 5 years. But we still haven't been able to finish our house. First the pandemic, then this war.*

*The money was only enough for the daily expenses of my 4 children. So, after paying a mediator, we filled out all the necessary documents, had an interview, and 3 months later we went to earn money.*

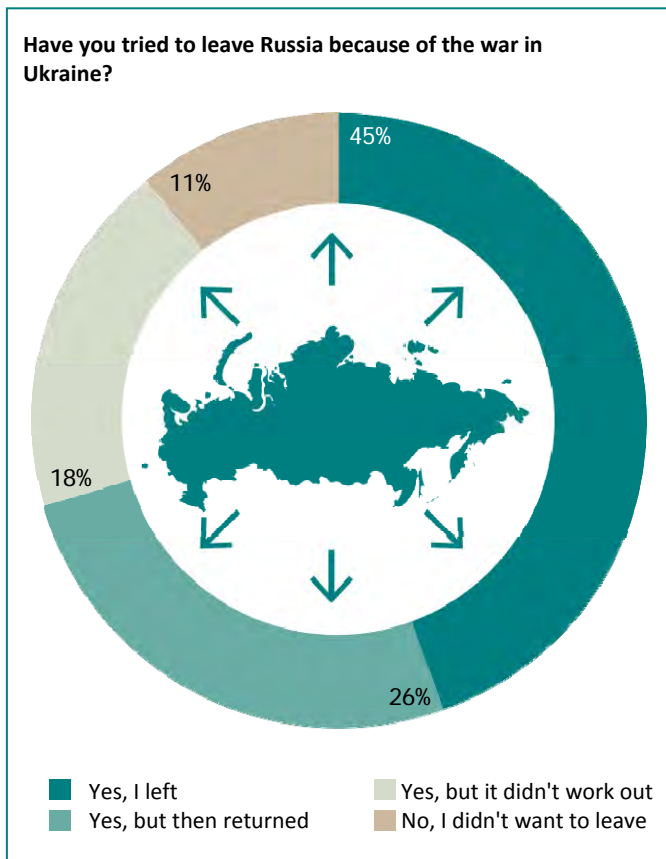
*Of course, the work is not easy. It depends on one's stamina and patience. But we earned in 6 months the amount of money which in Russia we could have raised only in 2-3 years".*

ALTYNBEK, 42 YEARS OLD

37% of respondents claim that they wanted to leave Russia in connection with the announcement of partial military mobilization. Those respondents who had Russian citizenship were most concerned about this issue. 11 out of 65 respondents surveyed have a Russian passport in their hands.

According to the decree signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, preparations for partial mobilization began in the country on September 21. Reservists and citizens who have served in the military will be subject to conscription, and before deployment they will undergo additional training.

DIAGRAM 3. IMPACT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE ON THE PLANS OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN RUSSIA



Only 37% of respondents said that they flew back home after the outbreak of war in Ukraine and the imposition of sanctions. But soon, due to the lack of labour alternatives, two-thirds of them returned back to Russia, and one-third stayed in Kyrgyzstan to look for other opportunities to earn money.

In 2022, following the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Kyrgyz authorities stepped up efforts to create new labour markets for compatriots.

*After finishing school in the village, I came to visit my relatives in Moscow. They already had Russian citizenship back then. They helped me to obtain Russian citizenship. Then I was drafted into the army, I went there. I served in a reconnaissance unit. I served in the army in 2010-2012, which means that I can be one of the first in line for mobilization. If they call me up, I'll have to go, there's no way out. I have my whole life here. Kids, wife. I bought a house with a mortgage. If you don't go, you will be considered a deserter. Let's see what happens. Especially now, they won't let me out of the country".*

EMIRBEK, 32 YEARS OLD

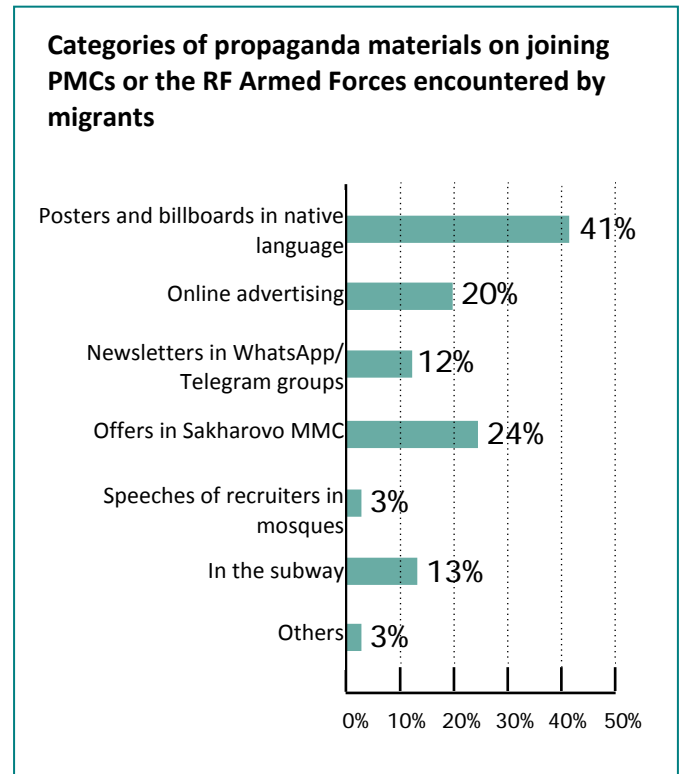
In other words, one of the impetuses for migrants to leave Russia was military mobilization.

*My husband is a citizen of Russia. I live in Kyrgyzstan with my two children, and he has been working in Moscow for many years. After we learned about the mobilization, my husband decided to return to his home country. He left Russia through Kazakhstan, as he had heard earlier that airports no longer let people out if they were on the list of mobilized people. They stood in line at the border for several days. There were a lot of people there. The Russians who were traveling with him turned out to have received summonses. I have other relatives in Moscow. Now we are worried about them, how they are doing there. For those whose relatives are in labour migration, it is very difficult now».*

NURGUL, 37 YEARS OLD

According to respondents (76%), Russia is purposefully conducting an agitation campaign to attract foreign citizens to the war in Ukraine. Most of all migrants encountered calls to join the RF Armed Forces or PMCs on the streets, where beautiful advertising posters romanticize military service (41%), in second place are advertisements and offers of contract service in Sakharovo MMC (24%), in third place are online advertisements (20%), in the subway (13%), mailings with calls in WhatsApp groups of migrants (12%), and others.

DIAGRAM 4. SCHEME FOR RECRUITING MIGRANT WORKERS FOR WAR



*Advertising to join the contract service was everywhere. It was directed not only at migrant workers, of course. Russians were being recruited there as well. However, they were definitely targeting migrants.*

*Advertisements were broadcast even in buses in Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek languages. And the offers are very tempting for us: citizenship, a salary of over 200 thousand rubles a month, social benefits, etc. Another thing is whether a person will live up to his cherished desires?"*

AIDANA, 29 YEARS OLD

86% of male respondents note that illegal detentions, raids, interrogations and inspections have increased from the beginning of the war in Ukraine to the present day. Raids are carried out by Russian law enforcement officers rather harshly, with the use of brute force. It is during such checks that migrants are voluntarily and compulsorily offered to sign a contract with the Russian Armed Forces.

*My friends and I and other Kyrgyz guys were playing soccer after work in the yard. Apparently, some of the neighbors did not like it and called the police. The police came and started beating us, forcing us to lie on the ground, kicking us in the heels. They found out which of us had Russian citizenship, why we were not mobilized, and wanted to force us to sign a voluntary contract. Of course, no one signed, even in fear of being beaten up.*

*We know we can't survive there. Migrants like us are sent forward. The first, so to speak".*

.....  
MURAT, 33 YEARS OLD

Migrant workers were always a vulnerable topic for Russians. It was logical that with the onset of crisis moments in the country, xenophobia against migrants increased. And the war in Ukraine was no exception. Politicians everywhere proposed to force migrant workers to serve in the army and go to war. For example, Aleksandr Bastrykin, chairman of the Russian Investigative Committee, speaking at the St. Petersburg International Legal Forum, said that the increase in the number of murders committed by migrants amounted to 18% for the year. According to Bastrykin, crimes committed by migrants can be avoided by preventively sending them to war. Those who refuse, the chairman of the Investigative Committee calls for deportation to their home country. In May, just when anti-migrant raids were becoming more frequent, Mikhail Matveev, a Duma deputy from the CPRF, said that a bill was being drafted that would allow migrants to be sent to the front lines.

*When I was detained by the police, I had no documents in my hands. I don't speak Russian very well.*

*So they started to get angry with me. Accusing me of being an illegal immigrant. They said that if I did not agree to go on contract service, they would deport me. I replied that this was not our war, and he got so angry with me, saying that I was unscrupulous, living and feeding my family at the expense of Russia, and that I did not want to defend it.*

*They started kicking me in the heels. I spent two whole days at the police station. I did not sign or agree to anything.*

*Then my relatives came with a lawyer and showed all my documents. My documents were okay. I was released.*

.....  
MUKHAMED, 36 YEARS OLD

36% of respondents believe that xenophobia of ordinary Russians and representatives of law enforcement agencies towards migrant workers has intensified since the beginning of the war.

According to respondents, the following measures of pressure have intensified since the beginning of mobilization:

- increase in unwarranted inspections - 28%;
- unjustified detention of migrant men of an age suitable for military service - 19%;
- increase in the number of "NELEGAL" raids - 40%;
- compulsion to join contract military service - 19%;

Undoubtedly, sanctions have changed the labour market and narrowed employment opportunities for migrants. Against the backdrop of difficulties in finding a living, tempting offers for migrants to work in the occupied territories of Ukraine are appearing. Hundreds of Kyrgyzstanis have traveled to these regions to work on the reconstruction of Ukrainian cities.

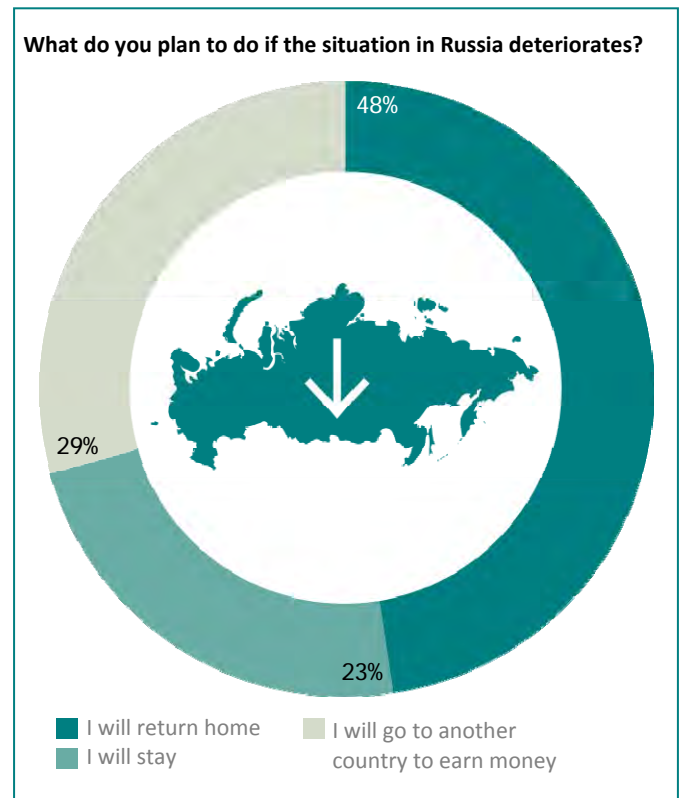


In telegram channels where migrants communicate, there were mailings about work at a construction site in Mariupol. The salary is good, food and accommodation are provided. At that time, I was in big trouble for the second month. I couldn't find a job, I wasn't earning enough. I had debts. After thinking about it for a few days, my companion and I decided to go. Why be afraid? There are already Russians living there. I called the phone number. A Russian guy answered. The construction company itself brought the guys from Moscow in big buses. There are only 156 of us. 60% migrants, the rest Russians. There are only 8 Kyrgyz among us. There are a lot of Uzbeks and Tajiks here. I have been in this city for 3 months already. I have received my salary only for the first month so far (80,000 rubles), the rest is promised in the near future. Food is provided and accommodation is available. It's just hard work. I'm getting tired".

.....  
NURSULTAN, 29 YEARS OLD

In January 2023, the media reported on the involvement of Tajik and Uzbek migrants in reconstruction work in the LPR and DPR. In the video, migrants complained that their wages were delayed. There was no information about the involvement of Kyrgyz citizens in open sources.

DIAGRAM 5. PLANS OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN CASE OF DETERIORATION OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN RUSSIA



The deteriorating situation in Russia worries migrant workers, and due to fears of recruitment, 48% of respondents plan to return home in the near future, 29% are already planning another migration destination to earn money, while only 23% plan to stay in Russia.

# FINDINGS

Thus, the Russian economy is in dire need of migrants, but the Russian state demonstrates a classic colonial approach towards them. The situation of migrant workers in Russia has only worsened because of the war, and there has been a significant increase in the violation of their rights by the state. All last year the state tried to involve migrant workers in the war in Ukraine, directing all administrative resources to this end. There are no exact figures on how many citizens from Central Asian countries are fighting on the side of Russia.

Three main strategies of the Russian authorities for recruiting migrant workers into the armed forces have been identified. The first includes the recruitment of migrants with acquired Russian citizenship. According to the 2013 amendments to the law "On Military Duty," foreign citizens who acquired Russian citizenship are obliged to serve in the Russian armed forces. After the Russian invasion, representatives of the Ministry of Defense began contacting young men from Central Asia who had obtained Russian passports, threatening to revoke their citizenship if they refused to serve in the army. There have also been cases of people over the age of conscription being summoned to military recruitment offices and threatened with revocation of their citizenship.

The second strategy was to recruit migrants with the promise of citizenship and high salaries. Recruiters promised migrants that their citizenship applications would be processed within three months of signing a contract. In September 2022, a law was even passed that reduced the processing time for citizenship applications from one year to three months. Representatives of the Ministry of Defense also offered future soldiers a salary of up to 200 thousand rubles per month, which was much higher than any other job available to migrant workers. Since July 2022, PMC Wagner has posted vacancies of guards with high salaries on social networks in Central Asia.

The third strategy is the recruitment of migrant workers who are in prison. According to reports from relatives, convicts were promised release and monetary rewards. Since the end of 2022, cases of deaths of Kyrgyz nationals recruited in Russian prisons have been documented. The Russian government, taking advantage of their vulnerability and lack of military experience, illegally involves them in the war, using them as "cannon fodder".

The recruited prisoners, according to the PMC representatives themselves, are called "for one-use", as the mortality rate among them is the highest.

In essence, Russia is committing an inhuman crime against prisoners who are unable to assess the risks of participating in war because they are isolated from real events. They are deceived with promises of freedom in the first place and monetary rewards. After mobilization, the situation has only worsened.

Some migrants from Kyrgyzstan received summonses even though they did not even have Russian citizenship. Moscow authorities opened a recruitment office in the Sakharovo migration center. Information about the benefits of a contract with the Russian Armed Forces was available in all Central Asian languages. In early 2023, some Kyrgyz natives with Russian passports were banned from leaving Russia because they were on mobilization lists. In addition, the Russian authorities have engaged migrant workers from Central Asia in the reconstruction of Ukrainian cities and the construction of military fortifications along the front line. There are facts of delayed salaries for work in the occupied territories.

Thus, as in other spheres, economic logic conflicts with mobilization logic in the sphere of migration policy. It can be assumed that in the coming year the need for unskilled workforce in Russia will continue to grow. This will be due to the "simplification" of the economy, the growing share of the defense industry in it, as well as further reduction of the labour force due to natural causes and in connection with the ongoing mobilization. The threat of forced recruitment is unlikely to radically affect the decision of Central Asians to go to Russia for work, but may become an additional factor in favor of seeking other labour markets.

As in previous years, Russia remains an important labour market for Central Asian migrants in 2023 and is likely to continue to attract them in 2024. At the same time, Russia's economy, which has so far withstood harsh international sanctions, is beginning to slow down. Migrants, for whom economic considerations are particularly important, are forced to look for alternative destinations, as returning home, where jobs are scarce, is impractical.

Since 2022, Kazakhstan has attracted additional migrant workers from Central Asia. Turkey has also shown its attractiveness in recent years. In addition, Turkey will need workers to rebuild the areas destroyed by the devastating earthquake in February 2023. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan persistently continues to work on diversifying the directions of labour migration and has concluded a bilateral agreement with Israel, while negotiating with Portugal, the UK and Saudi Arabia. In addition, the UK has allocated up to 40,000 six-month visas for workers from the post-Soviet space in 2022. As more host countries begin to show interest in Central Asian workers, competition for human resources is expected to increase. Russia's role as a host community, on the other hand, will diminish in the long term. In 2023, it will be important for Kyrgyzstan and Central Asian countries to follow these developments closely and accompany the growing labour mobility with appropriate agreements and governance mechanisms for the benefit of migrant workers.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic have so far only limited themselves to appeals to the citizens of the country asking them not to participate in such conflicts. The government of the Kyrgyz Republic should realize that if it wishes, the Russian government will find leverage over migrants to recruit them for the war in Ukraine.

Kyrgyzstan should make it clear to the Russian side through all channels that the country is against the participation of Kyrgyz citizens in the armed conflict in Ukraine.

- It is urgent to take under protection citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as compatriots who have obtained citizenship of the Russian Federation.
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic together with consulates should issue return certificates to such persons as quickly and easily as possible and ensure their prompt return to their home country.
- It is urgent to sign and ratify the 2016 Treaty between the two countries on the transfer of persons sentenced to imprisonment. This will give Kyrgyzstan the opportunity to take back its citizens who are in Russian colonies.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic should oblige the embassy in Moscow to issue a separate note of protest for each identified case of recruitment and sending to war and publicize it in the media. And the General Prosecutor's Office should initiate cases on the facts of recruitment of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- The economic block of the Cabinet of Ministers should facilitate the rapid transfer of business of our compatriots from Russia to Kyrgyzstan and retention of their capital inside the country.
- It is necessary to continue intensive work of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on diversification of directions of labour migration to such countries as Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Great Britain. In October 2022, President Putin stated that the current concept of Russia's migration policy will be revised. Russia expects further strengthening of migration control, which means that the number of migrant workers in Russia will be further reduced.
- Diversification of labor migration destinations remains significant, with Uzbekistan leading the way. Having previously concluded agreements on external labor migration with South Korea, Russia, Japan, UAE, Kazakhstan and Turkey, Uzbekistan signed another agreement with Israel in 2022 and continued negotiations with Portugal, UK and Saudi Arabia. In addition, Russia has abolished quotas for Uzbek migrant workers in accordance with the bilateral agreement between Russia and Uzbekistan on organized labour recruitment. Kyrgyzstan needs to strengthen efforts to expand alternative directions of labour migration, and the involvement of state agencies in sending labour migrants to work will reduce the risks of labour migration.
- For example, a new trend is the increasing flow of migrants to the UK, which has begun hiring seasonal workers from Central Asia to compensate for the acute shortage of farmers after the UK's exit from the EU (Brexit). In 2022, the UK has allocated up to 40,000 six-month visas to workers from Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space.
- As more host countries begin to show interest in migrant workers from Central Asia, competition for human resources is expected to increase and Russia's role as a large host community is expected to decline in the long term.
- But exploring new markets that can accommodate large numbers of migrant workers from Central Asia will not be an easy task. It may take years before this development becomes fully apparent. Consequently, accompanying efforts should be directed at addressing existing mismatches between the formal and practical qualifications of migrant workers in the new countries, and establishing effective systems of admission, control and operation.

- It is necessary to strengthen information work among migrant workers on the risks and consequences of participation in hostilities on the territory of foreign countries.

## ABBREVIATIONS

UN - United Nations;

RF – Russian Federation;

KR - Kyrgyz Republic;

CA – Central Asia;

EECA - Eastern Europe and Central Asia;

MIA RF - Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation;

FSB RF - Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation;

PMC - Private Military Company;

DPR - Donetsk People's Republic;

LPR - Lugansk People's Republic;

CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States;

MDMA MIA RF – Main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation;

EAEU - Eurasian Economic Union;

EEC - Eurasian Economic Committee;

EU – European Union;

FCs - Foreign Citizens;

FGD - Focus Group Discussion;

MHI - Mandatory Health Insurance;

GDP - Gross Domestic Product;

MMC - Multifunctional Migration Center;

SMO - Special Military Operation.

## GLOSSARY

**Russia's invasion of Ukraine (2022)** - "special military operation - SMO" in Ukraine, Russian aggression against Ukraine, Russian-Ukrainian war.

**Mobilization in Russia** - On 21 September 2022, during Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine and shortly after the counter-offensive by the Armed Forces of Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin announced the beginning of "partial mobilization" in Russia.

**Economic sanctions (including trade sanctions and financial sanctions)** are prohibitive economic measures that are used by one participant in international trade (a country or group of countries) against another participant (the "target of sanctions") to force the latter to change its political position.

**PMC Wagner Group** - a Russian non-state armed formation (private military company, PMC) with an unclear legal status, controlled by its organizer, Russian businessman Yevgeny Prigozhin. In a number of countries, this formation has the status of a terrorist organization. Since 2014, the group has been operating in Ukraine and then in Syria. The group is armed with heavy equipment, artillery and military aviation. It is one of the main PMCs attracting migrant workers from Central Asia for the war in Ukraine.

**PMC Patriot** - a Russian private military and security company that directly competes with Yevgeny Prigozhin's Wagner Group and was deployed by Russia during the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

**Donetsk People's Republic (DPR)** - a state entity created by Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. It existed as a self-proclaimed state from 2014 to 2022, and then was annexed by Russia. The DPR claims the territory of the Donetsk region of Ukraine. Its administrative center is the city of Donetsk. According to Ukrainian law, since 2014, the territory of Donetsk region controlled by the DPR has been under Russian occupation.

**The Lugansk People's Republic (LPR)** - a state entity created by Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. It existed as a self-proclaimed state from 2014 to 2022, and then was annexed by Russia. The LPR claims the territory of the Lugansk region of Ukraine. Its administrative center is the city of Lugansk. According to Ukrainian law, since 2014, the territory of Lugansk region controlled by the LPR has been under Russian occupation.