



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on January 10, 2024

## Ukraine Buys 50,000 Women's Military Uniforms

Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov wrote in a Facebook post on January 8 that the ministry has bought 50,000 sets of women's uniforms for the first time since the start of the conflict with Russia. Umerov's revelation came a day ahead of an expected parliamentary vote on amendments to the law on mobilization.



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The proposed amendments have caused a public outcry, with some slamming them as "unconstitutional" and targeted primarily at draft dodgers. Although it has been said that the changes to legislation do not entail the conscription of women, such proposals have been previously articulated.

"For the first time, the Ministry of Defense purchased 50,000 sets of women's uniforms, 100,000 electric heaters, and 15,000 active headphones," Last month, Ukrainian MP Inna Sovsun said the government should contemplate drafting women if necessary. She proposed that the provision of uniforms for women should be among the preparations required to enforce the plan. Moreover, last October, requirements for the military registration of women with a medical degree materialized.

Over 60,000 women already serve in the Ukrainian army, comprising about 7 percent of the country's armed forces, based on figures from the Ministry of Defense.

Kyiv has been grappling to mobilize sufficient men to send to the front line. Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky told journalists last month that 450,000 to 500,000 new soldiers were required, but that attaining that number was a "sensitive issue." Zelensky's announcement came after a large-scale counter-offensive by Ukraine last year, which has been admitted as a failure by the armed forces chief, General Valery Zaluzhny.

Ukraine has also been afflicted with numerous setbacks in obtaining aid, with Republicans in Washington vetoing a \$61 billion military package and Hungary blocking an EU financial deal worth €50 billion (about \$55 million).

To make matters more complicated, the head of the National Bank of Ukraine, Andrey Pyshny, stated that Kyiv is prepared to mull the possibility of imposing banking restrictions on Ukrainians who evade military service.

A government request submitted last month would lower the age of conscription from 27 to 25 and remove exemptions for disabilities, among other things.

"We have taken note of this bill, and I think that when it is worked out in parliament, we should have discussions and an exchange of views," Pyshny told the Ukrainian outlet Zerkalo Nedeli. "If the need arises, and it is likely to arise, we will take part in the discussion. I think it will lead us to the optimal solution."

If legislators include the provision permitting for the seizure of draft dodgers' bank accounts, the



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National Bank will adhere to the law, Pyshny said.

Ukrainians living abroad who have not registered for military service may also be refused consular and banking services under the proposed law, as per statements by Batkivshchyna party MP Vadim Ivchenko, who sits on the parliamentary committee on National Security, Defense and Intelligence.

Kyiv has already demanded that EU countries hosting Ukrainian refugees send back men capable of military service, although most have declined to do so.

Zaluzhny, commander in chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, [told lawmakers](#) that everyone mobilized will receive 80 days of training. However, unless he gets more troops somehow, “there will be no one to defend the state.”

If members of parliament cannot agree on a new mobilization law, they are welcome to volunteer for the front themselves, Zaluzhny reportedly told lawmakers.

Zaluzhny’s comments came during a meeting of the National Security Committee of the Verkhovna Rada, as per reports by the Ukrainian publication New Voice. The outlet quoted a source who was present, but wished to remain anonymous.

“I need people,” the general reportedly said. “The Russians have already called up 400,000 and are preparing several hundred thousand more. And who do I have? Either turn to the world and ask people there, or go fight [yourselves] if you don’t provide.”

According to the same source, he also opposed a proposal to draft convicts, as this would create a perception that military service was a punishment.

Ukraine has grappled with replacing its battlefield losses in its conflict with Russia. Although the Russian Defense Ministry has estimated Kyiv’s losses at over 383,000 killed, wounded, and missing, former prosecutor-general Yuri Lutsenko put that number as high as 500,000 in a recent interview.

“They should say how many Ukrainians have died. I know that this news will be received badly. But there is no other way to bring out of the comfort zone millions of those who hide behind bogus stories that everyone can serve except me,” Lutsenko said, in an attempt to get more people to sign up for the military.

Ukraine’s Western backers have pressured Zelensky to expand the draft to younger and older men and women as well, Russian intelligence [revealed](#).

According to Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu, Ukrainian forces lost more than 90,000 service members over the course of the operation between June and October alone.

“The American and British curators recommend that the Ukrainian ... leadership lower the [minimum] draft age to 17 years and increase [the maximum one] to 70 years, as well as call more women to arms,” the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) declared in a statement, citing “reliable data” it garnered.

The SVR alluded to a Ukrainian bill proposing an increase in the draft age ceiling as an instance of potential mobilization policy changes. The legislation singled out by the Russian intelligence was [introduced](#) to the Ukrainian parliament in September and suggests permitting men older than 60 to join the army ranks on a voluntary basis. The elderly volunteers would have to be considered fit for service by a military medical commission and have prior military experience, as well as be deemed sufficiently qualified, the draft bill said.



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An MP from Zelensky's ruling "Servant of the People" party, Mariana Bezuglaya, has proposed amendments that would permit drafting women. Her own Facebook poll, however, showed that 74 percent of men and 65 percent of women were prepared to renounce their Ukrainian citizenship rather than get conscripted.

Bezuglaya was the only committee member who wanted to keep working on the proposed amendments to the mobilization bill.



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