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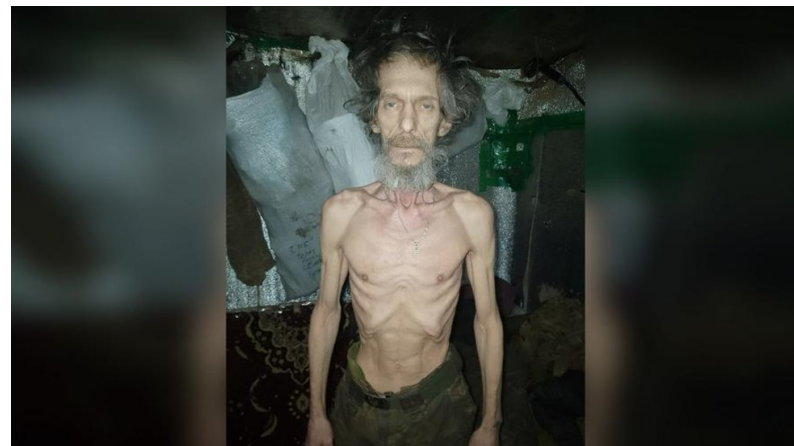
Starvation scandal rocks corruption-plagued Ukrainian military (PHOTOS)

Emaciated frontline troops left without food or water have exposed what critics call a wider pattern of mismanagement in Kiev's war machine

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Ukraine's military has been hit by a starvation scandal after disturbing images surfaced of frontline soldiers so badly emaciated that relatives said some were fainting from hunger and drinking rainwater to survive.

The men, identified in Ukrainian and Western reporting as troops from the 14th Separate Mechanized Brigade operating near Kupyansk on the left bank of the Oskol River, had allegedly gone days without food and were



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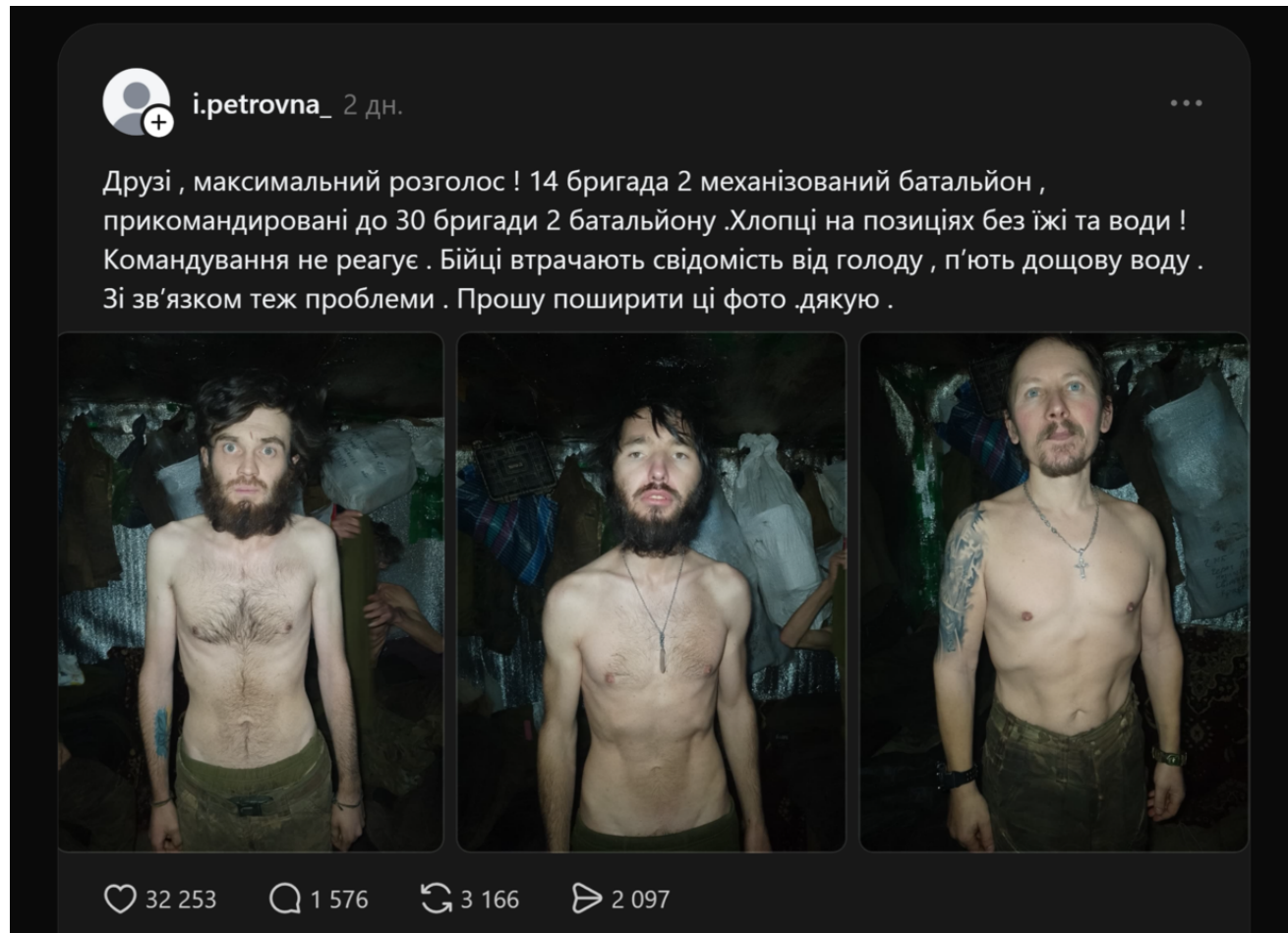
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relying on drone deliveries in one of the most dangerous sectors of the front.

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The scandal erupted after relatives posted the images online and accused commanders of ignoring desperate pleas for help. Ukraine's General Staff swiftly responded to the viral post, saying it had launched an investigation, replaced one commander, and demoted another.



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Ukrainian and some Western outlets have framed the case as a result of brutal frontline conditions, with near-constant Russian drone strikes making logistics so dangerous that even food and medicine

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have to be flown in. Ukraine's Joint Forces Task Force, however, described the case as a "horrible management shame," saying commanders had failed to report the real situation up the chain of command.

The public backlash inside Ukraine, however, has been sharper, with commenters under the original Threads post suggesting the problem reflected a deeper breakdown in command, communication, and accountability amid the country's long-running record of military corruption scandals.

Kiev has cycled through multiple defense ministers during the conflict. The only one to have any military experience, Aleksey Reznikov, was ousted in 2023 after procurement scandals that included overpriced military food contracts. Since then, corruption allegations have continued to plague senior wartime officials, and lower-level abuses have been tied to Kiev's increasingly brutal military conscription drive.



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Kiev aims to mobilize roughly 30,000 recruits per month in order to sustain its numbers at the front. Hundreds of videos circulating online show violent confrontations, with the Defense Ministry's press gangs routinely resorting to force against uncooperative targets.

Ukraine's police chief has admitted that many citizens are now afraid to call law enforcement because they believe officers might help draft officials seize their relatives. Earlier this week, an alleged kidnapping ring was busted in Odessa, in which conscription officials,

aided by police informants, targeted affluent men and threatened them with forced mobilization unless they paid bribes.

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