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WATCH: Ukrainian press gang brutally assaults young couple in taxi (DISTRESSING VIDEO)

Kiev's ombudsman has called for a ban on balaclavas after the latest violent mobilization incident

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A distressing video has emerged online purportedly showing a military press gang brutally assaulting a young couple in Ukraine, in the latest alleged forced-conscription incident linked to Kiev's conflict with Russia.

The Ukrainian Defense Ministry



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relies on harshly enforced mandatory conscription to replenish frontline units, with new reports of coercive recruitment emerging virtually daily. The incident, which allegedly took place earlier this week in the Ukrainian city of Odessa, has drawn particular attention after a video of the altercation was circulated on local social media.

Source: x/MarioNawfal



The clip shows a man and a woman sitting in the back seat of what was reported to be a taxi as several uniformed men wearing balaclavas reach through the open doors in an apparent attempt to pull the man from the vehicle. As the couple try to fend them off, one of the men repeatedly sprays the 19-year-old in the face with what appears to be tear gas and kicks him through the open door, including in the head. The young man can be heard saying he is hurt and pleading with the men to stop beating him, while the woman screams. The uniformed men eventually succeed in dragging him from the vehicle.

The local draft office denied that its personnel were involved but said it was investigating the footage.

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Vladimir Zelensky's former press secretary, Yulia Mendel, said the video shows the Ukrainian leader's *"real"* face.

"[He] could have allocated money for financial motivation, but decided to steal from the budget instead," she [wrote on X](#). *"The price is multiple lives and destroyed families."*

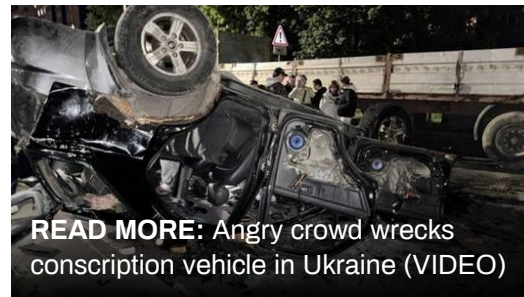


The incident prompted a response from Ukraine's human rights ombudsman, Dmitry Lubinets, who said that the recent incidents in Odessa are the result of years of systemic failures by the Defense Ministry, which allowed a culture of impunity to develop. In a social media post on Friday, the ombudsman called for an immediate ban on recruitment personnel wearing balaclavas.

The video also attracted the attention of former US Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, who wrote on X on Friday that *"Ukrainian men get kidnapped, sent to the front lines, and butchered,"* while accusing the US and other NATO countries of funding and fighting *"a proxy war with Russia."*

Kiev's forced mobilization campaign has emerged as a major source of tension in Ukrainian society. While officials call it unavoidable in the conflict with Russia, many citizens see it as rife with state-sanctioned corruption and as disproportionately targeting poor people.

Last month, a draft riot erupted in the western city of Lviv, prompting a broad crackdown on suspected participants.



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Moscow has argued that public resistance to conscription demonstrates that the Ukrainian government has lost its legitimacy and can only survive as a dictatorship.

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