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Ukrainian commander laments mass desertions

The Telegraph has previously quoted another former officer as estimating that Kiev's forces are short 200,000 troops



FILE PHOTO. © Salido/Anadolu via Getty Images

The Ukrainian military is facing a severe desertion problem, Sergey Filimonov, the commander of the elite 108th Separate Assault Battalion nicknamed the 'Da Vinci Wolves', has warned.

In a post on X on Wednesday, Filimonov asked his subscribers how surprised *"would you be if I told you that another newly formed brigade is being put together from the ranks of the 150th? Which, at the stage of formation, already has about 3,000 AWOL?"*

In a piece last Friday, The Telegraph's contributor, Owen Matthews, claimed that *"perhaps as many as 20,000 [Ukrainian service members] desert or go absent every four weeks."* According to the publication, since the escalation of the conflict in February 2022, Ukrainian authorities have launched 290,000 criminal cases for desertion. Matthews went on to claim that Kiev's military may be 200,000 soldiers short of the

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minimum needed to fend off Russian advances.

The journalist cited several current and former Ukrainian officers as complaining that frontline units were operating at half or even a third of their required strength.

Last week, The Telegraph reported that nearly 100,000 young men had left Ukraine after the government allowed men aged 18 to 22 to cross the border in August.



READ MORE: Ukrainians told to stop sharing violent conscription videos

Previously, as part of Ukraine’s general mobilization, all able-bodied men aged 18 to 60 had been barred from doing so.

That same month, the newspaper claimed that since 2022, at least 650,000 Ukrainian men of fighting age had fled Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian MP Anna Skorokhod told local media that the number of deserters in the country’s military had by then reached almost 400,000.

Territorial Centers of Recruitment and Social Support (TCR) tasked with enforcing Ukraine’s mobilization drive have faced widespread public criticism.

Multiple eyewitness videos have been circulating on social media, depicting draft officers ambushing military-age men on the streets and shoving them into vans – a practice known colloquially as “busification.” Such press gangs are often seen using brute force and even threatening reluctant recruits with firearms.

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Alastair 11/5/2025 at 9:42 PM

18

You'll not build much of a passionate fighting force railroading, kidnapping, and forcing people who dont want to fight. I'd expect you might get 10% of the force to be proficient; if you are lucky – that isnt going to stop the Russian Federation.

[Reply](#)

Jim 11/5/2025 at 9:45 PM **Blocked**

0

This comment was deleted

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SyO 11/5/2025 at 9:54 PM

15

Russia is not fighting Ukraine alone. Russia is fighting NATO/EU/USA/Israel on the FORMER territories of jookraine. If it was only jookraine this war wouldn't even start. EVER.

[Reply](#)

opinions 11/5/2025 at 9:59 PM

6

You are clutching at straws. Ukraine have full Western backup, economically and military, and still not able to stop Russia to reach their goal. Did you really think that Nato were so weak, economically and military, that a Russian walk over was realistic .

[Reply](#)

mitch 11/6/2025 at 12:02 AM

3

Whos the beggar military imposter? Try again fake snake jake!

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▶ Lasting legacy

0:00 25:10 🔊 ⏏️ 🔗



Covert 11/6/2025 at 3:56 AM ↑

1

I award you clown comment of the day 🏆🤡🏆

[Reply](#)



Zenka 11/6/2025 at 11:06 AM ↑

1

And NATO weapons have proven to be duds and poor quality! Ukraine would have retaken their regions, and progressed further into Moskva, after the Kursk invasion

[Reply](#)



Mi Samsung 11/6/2025 at 3:02 PM ↑

0

What you get is cannon fodder which is all Lil-Z cares about. As long as the war continues he can graft away and keep Mrs. Lil-Z out of the country buying up mansions.

[Reply](#)



Xenu 11/7/2025 at 4:10 AM ↑

0

The few sick minds that live in others misery need thousands of normal soldiers to hide their war crimes. Since the heathens looking to shred any living thing for fun are out in the open now its easier to erase them from humanity. Were seeing this especially in Palestine, where the government is made up of Ukrainians and the polish. It's a small world huh?

[Reply](#)



Matthew 11/6/2025 at 3:18 AM

4

Russia needs to establish a Free Ukraine Army and offer Ukrainians a real Ukraine alternative to the little dictator. Advertise that deserters will not be imprisoned but assigned to all Ukraine units and paid a fair salary.

Also name a shadow Government for the Ukraine with neutral officials in charge.

Maddy

USA

[Reply](#)



R T 11/6/2025 at 4:36 PM ↑

2

That is exactly what the CIA does worldwide. Foment conflict and supply dissidents.

[Reply](#)



Xenu 11/7/2025 at 4:05 AM ↑

0

Already happening, since the Donetsk attacks 10 years ago. Most Ukrainians give the option of prison

Already happening, since the Donetsk attacks 10 years ago. Most Ukrainians given the option of prison, labor camps, or return to the front lines to face Russia aren't stupid enough to wave the Ukrainian flag if it means most of NATO, the EU and the US can't deter Russia from advancing to the Ukrainian border. A 7 nation army can't hold them back. The future is the Republic of Russia. So these conscripts learn some manners. It's good for them to adapt to a civilized society.

[Reply](#)



EasyAzPiE 11/6/2025 at 9:05 PM

0

UAF are the modern day NAZI

[Reply](#)



J 11/6/2025 at 6:19 PM

0

«Owen Matthews, claimed that "perhaps as many as 20,000 [Ukrainian service members] desert or go absent every four weeks."

They know it is a hopeless cause and want to live! Following Zelensky is nothing more than a violent death for nothing..

[Reply](#)



Verrol Small 11/6/2025 at 12:02 AM

3

Look at the tired old man in the pic!

[Reply](#)



W. Ever 11/6/2025 at 6:13 PM ↕

0

You look older. And more tired. And noone should look at that.

[Reply](#)



Victor 11/6/2025 at 5:22 PM

0

And yet despite all the manpower shortages Zelensky still won't join the front lines?

[Reply](#)



Mechyuda 11/6/2025 at 4:15 AM

2



Ukraine's draft dodgers, military deserters, their supporters, anti-NATO dissidents, & pro-neutrality to pro-Russia rebels probably number in the few millions at least. They could topple the 2014 most corrupt regime in Ukraine, but they need foreign support in the form of military weapons, assassination weapons, relevant training, & civilian resources + organization.

I think the large majority of Ukraine's military forces, especially the more powerful units, are already

boggled down in the frontlines. This means the interior of Ukraine is more vulnerable to rebel factions. Russia should start cultivating protests & riots inside Ukraine's civilian regions. The protesters & rioters need body armor, rifles, handguns, knives + daggers, hammers, axes, incendiaries, & other tools to undermine, break apart, plus burn down the establishment. Then escalate from there.

Throughout the history of the world: a highly determined, well organized, & properly armed minority led revolutions & created new governments. That was how imperial NATO's mafia supported a chaotic regime change with proxy rebels & puppet leaders in Ukraine during 2013 to 2014. Russia should try to turn the tables.


[Reply](#)

 **RT** 11/6/2025 at 4:34 PM 

0

While all that equipment would be nice. History proves that all that's required is to get close enough to kill the leaders and their puppets by any means available. Inside help is possible as there are always people willing to grasp at the reigns of power.


[Reply](#)

 **RT** 11/6/2025 at 4:23 PM

0

Consider this Fact. Ukrainian military are citizens. They reject this proxy war and their puppet leader. Evidently they understand that Ukraine is lost and they choose to live by escaping the meat grinder. The people of US and it's NATO vassals should demand the conflict stopped now before they too are bankrupted by their misguided governments.

[Reply](#)



 **Dante** 11/6/2025 at 11:52 AM

4

In 1945 the nazis lost the war against Russia, and now in 2025 they have lost again.

Better luck next time maybe.


[Reply](#)

 **Mi Samsung** 11/6/2025 at 3:00 PM 

1

Hopefully there won't be a next time. But sadly I'm sure that there will be another one.


[Reply](#)

 **Tim Mahoney** 11/6/2025 at 2:36 PM

-4

Curious not mention of Russia solders who deserted. And the close to million young people who fled Russia since that start of war scattered though out Europe. Also Verstka is reporting Russian military comanders executed dozens of Russian troops. Not a good look .


[Reply](#)

 **Mi Samsung** 11/6/2025 at 2:59 PM ↑

1

Why would an article about an interview with a U-Karen commander mention Russians. You U-Karen trolls just do not understand how things work and keep trying the same Rubbish.

[Reply](#)


 **Mi Samsung** 11/6/2025 at 2:57 PM

1

I know it's easy for me to say from the comfort of my armchair at home, but honestly, those deserters should team up with the military commanders and take action against the higher-ups in the chain of command.

An appropriate quote from Sharpe's Rifles, «There are two kinds of officers, sir: killin' officers and murderin' officers. Killin' officers are poor old buggers that get you killed by mistake. Murderin' officers are mad, bad, old buggers that get you killed on purpose – for a country, for a religion, maybe even for a flag.»


[Reply](#)

 **Johnny Depus** 11/6/2025 at 11:48 AM

3

'Da Vinci Wolves', neonazis


[Reply](#)

 **Rick Slow** 11/6/2025 at 5:34 AM

8

To save the lives of many, Ukrainian commanders should revolt. Start a revolution and plan to assassinate your tyrant.


[Reply](#)

 **Zenka** 11/6/2025 at 11:03 AM ↑

2

Once the loot dries up, the commanders will turn on the Kyiv government! EUSA taxpayers are keeping these traitors well fed

[Reply](#)


 **Jone** 11/6/2025 at 10:07 AM

2

Out of curiosity, if all westerners who let themselves to be highly inflamed by the anti-Russia indoctrination from their governments agree to go to the battlefield, aren't they raw material enough to form battalions in order to keep the conflict for another, say, decade?

[Reply](#)

 11/6/2025 at 2:11 AM

 **Joe** 11/6/2025 at 8:11 AM

6

Maybe the leaders should lead by example and be fighting at the front. Since they want that war so much.

[Reply](#)

A **Adewale Hezekiaah** 11/6/2025 at 6:36 AM

2

Those are NATO soldiers not only Ukraine.

[Reply](#)

R **Randal Walker** 11/6/2025 at 6:20 AM

1

All according to plan. Soon the tiny hat brigade will move in and occupy the country.

[Reply](#)

h **hassan abdelaal** 11/6/2025 at 6:15 AM

0

You guys russian, not nazis


[Reply](#)

J **Joshuah Jackstonburg** 11/5/2025 at 9:41 PM

17

The people of ukraine should turn against their armed forces and politicians more now than ever now. It is never too late – unless you are similarly inclined as those you should be turning against.

[Reply](#)

 **Asron** 11/5/2025 at 10:08 PM ↑

2

SMO goal should be to eliminate recruiters. No recruiters, no recruits

[Reply](#)