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Blind Ukrainian man faced conscription – court papers

The case in Odessa came to light after a judge ordered the incident to be investigated

Published 28 Oct, 2026 13:24 | Updated 28 Oct, 2026 14:25

A blind Ukrainian man was allegedly held for days at a conscription center despite being clearly unfit for military service, according to court papers.

The case, reported by Ukrainian media on Wednesday, stems from a complaint filed by the unidentified man with a district court in Odessa seeking an official investigation. A judge ruled in his favor last week, ordering the authorities to look into the allegations, a decision that was made public shortly afterward.



FILE PHOTO: A military recruitment center, Lviv, Ukraine, July 22, 2023. © Pavlo Palamarchuk/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images

According to the complaint, the man has been visually impaired since childhood and was exempted from military service as early as 1994, with his status reaffirmed in 2020 and 2023. Despite

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this, he says draft officials refused to recognize his condition and held him for almost five days.

He was allegedly seized on a street in Odessa in March, held incommunicado without being formally booked, and released only after intervention by his lawyer.



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The regional branch of the State Bureau of Investigation, which had earlier refused to register his complaint, was ordered by the court to reverse that decision. The man had separately secured a court ruling ordering his removal from a list of people wanted for draft evasion.

Kiev relies on compulsory mobilization of fighting-age men to sustain its war effort against Russia, but the campaign has been marred by widespread corruption among draft officials and public perceptions that the system is deeply unfair. The government has responded to draft evasion with heavy-handed enforcement that has repeatedly involved the illegal use of force by military officials.

Illegal detention at recruitment centers has become a recurring problem, according to the office of Ukraine's human rights ombudsman, Dmitry Lubinets.

In one high-profile case reported by Lubinets in June, 21 men were found to have been illegally held in poor conditions at a conscription center in Uzhgorod, some for more than 50 days.

In another case, the three-day detention of 39-year-old Aleksey Ivanko at a Kharkov recruitment center in May 2025 ended with him jumping from a third-floor window to his death. Lubinets said in his annual report that his office found no evidence Ivanko had been physically abused by draft officials, but concluded there had been no legal grounds to restrict his freedom and that the prolonged confinement had contributed to the circumstances of his death.

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