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Forcibly mobilised and then killed by drone

The murderous logic of war in practice

Anti-Militarist Initiative

August 27th, 2025

The mainstream media publishes articles about how terribly the Russian army treats deserters. *“Chained to trees, locked in metal tanks, or dragged behind off-road vehicles—this is the reality for Russian soldiers who refused to fight in Ukraine,”* they note.¹

As usual, there is not much written about the equally horrific massacres of Ukrainian deserters. One thing is certain, however. The combat capability of both armies is partly based on violent mobilization and torture techniques designed to discourage desertion and force even those who do not want to go to the front to do so. While thousands of soldiers are trying to desert, others are being sent to the front against their will, hoping to live to see another day. That is, unless a “suicide” drone armed with explosives happens to fly into their heads. On the internet, we can see videos of such drones belonging to the Ukrainian army massacring Russian soldiers

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<www.antimilitarismus.noblogs.org/post/2025/08/27/how-many-forcibly-mobilized-people-will-your-drones-help-kill>

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¹ Ruští dezertéři jsou brutálně mučeni. Svědectví přináší CNN | Newstream

on motorcycles, in trenches, on roads, in forests, plains, and elsewhere.²

In most cases, footage of these events is accompanied by articles that celebrate them and cynically dehumanize the victims. They never ask who these people are or how they ended up in a place where they were mercilessly killed. It is impossible not to notice that even the anti-fascist and “anarchist” movement is organizing collections for drones for the Ukrainian army. And because — like the pro-Western mainstream — this “radical left” environment also presents the war as a defensive action against occupiers, it probably doesn’t worry too much about the fact that its drones may well be massacring Russian soldiers who were forced to the front under threat of punishment. In the logic of a “defensive war,” every Russian soldier on the front line is a Putinist and an occupier.³ Thousands of deserters and forcibly mobilized soldiers are nothing to the supporters of this logic and can

² For example, here

<https://cnn.iprima.cz/ukrajinska-droni-elita-v-akci-madarovi-ptaci-vyzobali-rusy-na-motocyklech-ti-zkaze-neujeli-479487>

<https://cnn.iprima.cz/zabery-ukrajinske-likvidace-okupantu-ruskeho-vojaka-zachranila-lopatka-467046>

<https://cnn.iprima.cz/zabery-hruzy-v-ocich-kratce-pred-vybuchem-ukrajinske-drony-likviduji-ruske-okupanty-475517>

Also here:

<https://msn.com/cs-cz/zpravy/other/ukrajinsk%C3%A9-drony-ude%C5%99ily-na-rusk%C3%A9-voj%C3%A1ky-v-lese/vi-AA1JzxmT>

What do we see in this video? A man in uniform with a backpack is walking through the forest when suddenly he is shot by a drone. To the viewer, it is presented as a sensational video of how Ukraine’s defenders stopped the occupier. However, it is not at all clear from the video who he was, why he was there, and whether he wanted to be there at all or was forced there by officers under threat of punishment. He is dead, and no one will ask him.

³ Reality speaks for itself. Forced mobilization and high desertion rates in the Russian army prove that not every soldier on the front line is a Putin supporter. On the contrary, many are victims of Putinism, just like those who are being shelled in Ukrainian cities.

be mercilessly eliminated.⁴ But what such an approach has to do with the declared struggle for freedom and justice is something that the proponents of this line will not explain to us. After all, most of them do not have to face fire on either side of the war line. They simply send a financial contribution from time to time from the safe haven of the pampered petty bourgeoisie (or their descendants) and then write an ideological shitstorm full of vague phrases about the struggle for freedom and self-determination of the Ukrainian people.

In contrast, soldiers on both the Ukrainian and Russian fronts are largely proletarians who do not have access to these privileges. Yes, they are proletarians, because the proletariat

<https://antimilitarismus.noblogs.org/post/2025/02/04/over-russian-18000-soldiers-desert>

⁴ The Solidrones initiative, which reportedly manufactures “drones for anti-authoritarian fighters in Ukraine,” states: “Defenders consume tens of thousands of unmanned aerial vehicles every month, because a precise drone strike can take out a significantly more expensive tank and cripple the occupiers’ advance.” <https://www.afed.cz/text/8191/solidrones>

There is no doubt that they operate drones, which are weapons designed for destruction and killing. But even if someone wanted to argue that they can also use supply or reconnaissance drones, it is important to clarify one thing. Even in such cases, drones serve as a means of support for senseless killing. There is no significant difference between a forcibly mobilized soldier being shot down directly by a drone and being tracked down with the help of a drone and then killed by infantry (often also supplied by drones), artillery, or the air force.

A number of other questions are also relevant.

Can the so-called “anti-authoritarians” who manufacture or operate drones decide how and against whom they will be deployed? That might be conceivable in the case of guerrilla warfare organized autonomously outside the state and against the state. However, this is not the case with these people, who, as they themselves acknowledge, are integrated into the official state army of Ukraine. It is therefore the army authorities who determine how the drones will be used by the “anti-authoritarians,” and there can be no question of autonomy of action. What will these “anti-authoritarians” do when their officers next order them to use drones to track down deserters attempting to escape? After all, this is one of the agenda items of the Ukrainian army, which they voluntarily serve.

has not ceased to exist just because some individuals have decided to remove this word from their vocabulary. The truth is that many proletarians are on the front lines involuntarily and under duress⁵. Very few have the means or documents to flee abroad. Many live in illegality: they avoid banks, leave big cities, hide in forests. If anything makes sense from an anarchist perspective, it is to provide them with support, not to build drones that will massacre them or track them down so that someone else can massacre them.⁶

Solidarity with deserters and those forcibly mobilized!
Resistance to those who build machines for their
killing!
Class solidarity against the murderous logic of war!

⁵ According to statements by surviving Russian soldiers, they were not allowed to evacuate because a blocking unit guarding them from behind would not let them leave their positions on the front line and would shoot if they attempted to retreat. Forcing soldiers to advance may therefore be less risky in some cases than retreating and deserting. This cruel tactic was used by the army during the Stalin era, and today the Russian army is returning to this practice.

⁶ The forcibly mobilisation and subsequent killing by drones is also well known to the population in Ukraine. However, we do not know of a single case where the production of drones by the Russian army has been financed with money by so-called anti-authoritarians or anarchists. In any case, we must condemn the forcibly mobilisation and murderous use of drones against the working class, whether these practices are used by the Ukrainian, Russian or any other state army.