



| Flash |

Dark Web Actors Seek to Avoid Russian Military Conscription

F-2024-09-24a

Classification: TLP:CLEAR

Criticality: Medium

Intelligence Requirements: Deep and Dark Web, Threat Actor

September 24, 2024

Scope Note

ZeroFox Intelligence is derived from a variety of sources, including—but not limited to—curated open-source accesses, vetted social media, proprietary data sources, and direct access to threat actors and groups through covert communication channels. Information relied upon to complete any report cannot always be independently verified. As such, ZeroFox applies rigorous analytic standards and tradecraft in accordance with best practices and includes caveat language and source citations to clearly identify the veracity of our Intelligence reporting and substantiate our assessments and recommendations. All sources used in this particular Intelligence product were **identified prior to 9:00 AM (EDT) on September 24, 2024**; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.

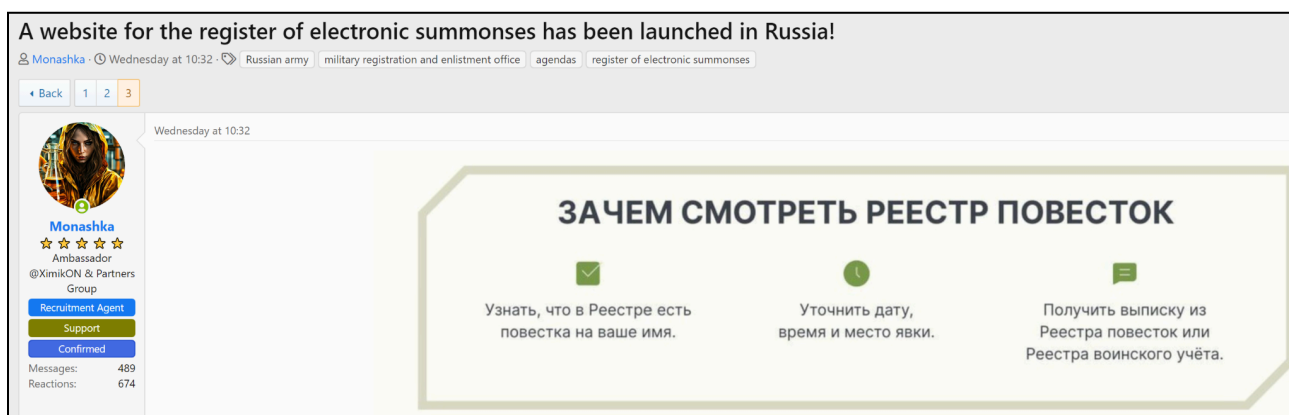
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| Key Findings

- On September 18, 2024, well-regarded actor “Monashka” posted in the Russian-speaking dark web community Rutor, bringing attention to the launch of a government web portal designed to overhaul the method by which military draft notices are served to Russian citizens.
- The post prompted discussion from several other actors centered around potential deep and dark web (DDW) services offering different methods of avoiding conscription in Russia.
- Since the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, ZeroFox has observed numerous discussions in DDW forums involving actors seeking ways to avoid being drafted.
- As the war continues and eligibility requirements widen, it is likely that an array of DDW services will emerge to meet the growing demand from those seeking to avoid military service.

Details

On September 18, 2024, well-regarded actor Monashka posted in the Russian-speaking dark web community Rutor, bringing attention to the launch of a government web portal designed to overhaul the method by which military draft notices are served to Russian citizens. The post prompted discussion from several other actors centered around potential DDW services offering different methods of avoiding conscription.



Rutor post by Monashka bringing attention to military draft service

Source: ZeroFox Intelligence

In a media statement several days later, a Russian military official suggested instead that the new draft notice portal would not become fully operational until January 1, 2025, stating that the existing system would remain in place this Autumn.¹ However, it is unclear when exactly the new draft notice system will take effect, which is reflected by the fears of Russia-based DDW actors.

- Russian media reporting suggests that the Russian Defence Ministry intends to launch an Autumn military conscription effort between October 1 and December 31, 2024, following similar efforts observed this past Spring.²

On April 17, 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law that paved the way for the digitalization of military registration. The service is alleged to function via the government portal named Gosuslugi, which assists citizens with pensions, passports, and tax affairs,

¹ hXXps://www.interfax[.]ru/russia/983195

² Ibid.

among other things.³ The legislation is very likely intended to prevent or lessen vast numbers of citizens taking measures to avoid military conscription.

- Following Putin's September 21, 2022 announcement of a "partial mobilization," worldwide media agencies suggested that as many as 700,000 citizens left Russia in the following month, with most destined for neighboring Mongolia, Georgia, and Kazakhstan.⁴ The move also almost certainly contributed to Finland promptly closing its border to Russian "tourists."⁵
- Russian citizens have also avoided being drafted by relocating within Russia, circumventing the existing notice system that requires the serving of physical documents.

Reportedly, under the new digital system, a summons would be officially considered "served" once it appears on the government portal, which both kick-starts a 20-day countdown within which the recipient must report to an enlistment office and enables border authorities to prevent served individuals from leaving Russia.

If you do not appear at the military registration and enlistment office within 20 calendar days, then citizens will be prohibited from:

- manage transport;
- register vehicles and real estate;
- receive loans and credits;
- register as an individual entrepreneur or self-employed.

All restrictions, including the ban on leaving Russia, will be lifted within 24 hours of reporting to the military registration and enlistment office.

Alleged requirements once summons is digitally served

Source: ZeroFox Intelligence

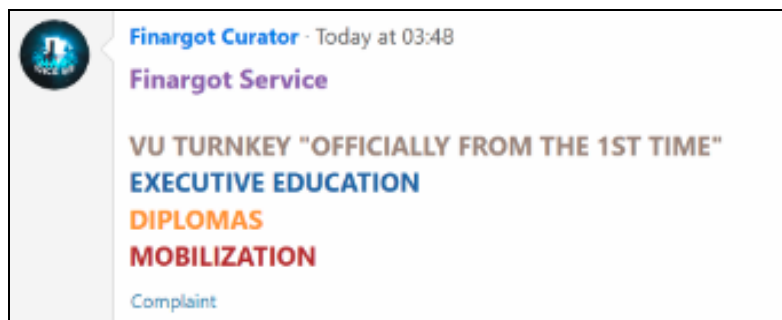
Since the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, ZeroFox has observed numerous discussions in DDW forums involving actors seeking ways to avoid being drafted. However, details behind the services offered are rarely specified—likely due to anticipated retribution from Russian security services or forum moderators. One response to the thread came from threat actor "Finargot Curator", who offered "Mobilization" in their list of services.

³ [hXXps://www.gosuslugi\[.\]ru/](https://www.gosuslugi.ru/)

⁴

[hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/europe/where-have-russians-been-fleeing-since-mobilisation-began-2022-10-06/](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/where-have-russians-been-fleeing-since-mobilisation-began-2022-10-06/)

⁵ [hXXps://www.bbc\[.\]co\[.\]uk/news/world-europe-63075892](https://www.bbc[.]co[.]uk/news/world-europe-63075892)

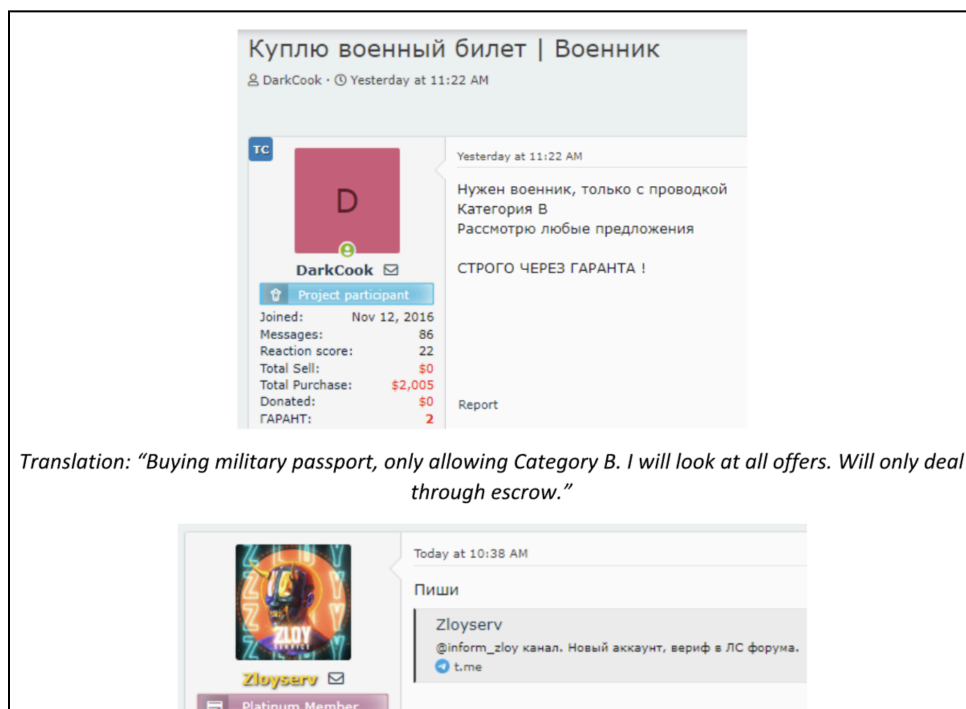


Reply from Finargot Curator offering "Mobilization" services

Source: ZeroFox Intelligence

ZeroFox has also observed advertisements from prospective buyers seeking "Category B" military passports, with some posts eliciting an opaque response from potential sellers.

- Category B reportedly indicates that the recipient is fit for military service, though excludes eligibility for service in a number of roles.



Translation: "Buying military passport, only allowing Category B. I will look at all offers. Will only deal through escrow."

Actor seeks Category B military passport

Source: ZeroFox Intelligence

Russian conscription eligibility, terms of service, and categorization have changed numerous times in recent years, prompting fears and uncertainties amongst citizens and Russia-based threat actors.⁶ As the war continues and eligibility requirements widen, it is likely that an array of DDW services will emerge to meet the growing demand from those seeking to avoid military service. The new digitized system is very likely to restrict the number of avenues by which this can be achieved, though threat actors will almost certainly continuously seek innovative ways to monetize fear and uncertainty—particularly if there is an increased number of citizens seeking DDW services.

⁶ [hXXps://kyivindependent\[.\]com/putin-signs-decree-to-conscript-150-000-russians-for-military-service/](https://kyivindependent.com/putin-signs-decree-to-conscript-150-000-russians-for-military-service/)

Appendix A: Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

	Red	Amber
WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?	Sources may use TLP:RED when information cannot be effectively acted upon by additional parties and could lead to impacts on a party's privacy, reputation, or operations if misused.	Sources may use TLP:AMBER when information requires support to be effectively acted upon but carries risks to privacy, reputation, or operations if shared outside of the organizations involved.
HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may NOT share TLP:RED with any parties outside of the specific exchange, meeting, or conversation in which it is originally disclosed.	Recipients may ONLY share TLP:AMBER information with members of their own organization and its clients, but only on a need-to-know basis to protect their organization and its clients and prevent further harm. Note that TLP:AMBER+STRICT restricts sharing to the organization only.
	Green	Clear
WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?	Sources may use TLP:GREEN when information is useful for the awareness of all participating organizations, as well as with peers within the broader community or sector.	Sources may use TLP:CLEAR when information carries minimal or no risk of misuse in accordance with applicable rules and procedures for public release.
HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may share TLP:GREEN information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community but not via publicly accessible channels.	Recipients may share TLP:CLEAR information without restriction, subject to copyright controls.

| Appendix B: ZeroFox Intelligence Probability Scale

All ZeroFox intelligence products leverage probabilistic assessment language in analytic judgments. Qualitative statements used in these judgments refer to associated probability ranges, which state the likelihood of occurrence of an event or development. Ranges are used to avoid a false impression of accuracy. This scale is a standard that aligns with how readers should interpret such terms.

Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Roughly Even Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain
1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%