

Deep Russia: There will be NO mobilization, which means there WILL be

What Russians discussed on "VKontakte" and "Telegram" from 3 to 9 August

Period	3 - 9 August 2026
Platforms	VKontakte, Telegram (regional communities)



Key Findings

Discussion of a possible **new wave of mobilization had been building for three weeks in a row**, but in the reporting week it dropped off sharply. At the same time, interest in the topic still remained higher than three weeks ago.

The peak of the topic came in the previous weeks. Back then Dmitry Medvedev personally called the rumors about mobilization "the enemy's lies", and before that Putin signed a law that opens up access to the civil registry office database for the Ministry of Defense and Rosgvardia. In the reporting week the topic continued with Putin signing a law that allows those convicted of drug smuggling, participation in a gang and participation in a criminal association to sign contracts with the Ministry of Defense "during a period of mobilization or wartime". However, this news no longer caused a new surge of discussion. It rather reinforced the already formed view that the state is expanding its personnel options in case of mobilization. In the regions studied, the topic of a possible new wave of mobilization is present unevenly. In the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, Magadan Oblast and the Temporarily Occupied Luhansk region there was not a single post about rumors of mobilization, while in all the other regions it was mentioned at least once on at least one of the platforms.

The through-line of all the discussions is an almost complete distrust of denials of a new mobilization by representatives of the authorities. Commentators constantly return to the experience of 2022, when mobilization was also denied shortly before it was announced. It is precisely this precedent that remains the main argument because of which even direct denials from the authorities do not remove the anxiety. Previous promises by the authorities, in particular on the retirement age, are also cited as an argument.

A noticeable part of the audience expects mobilization to be announced precisely after the elections. Comments suggest that unpopular decisions may be postponed until the end of the election campaign, and that mobilization is most likely being planned for September–October. Another widespread reaction is a passive acceptance of the situation: "after the elections we will find out".

Despite the anxiety and distrust of the authorities' assurances, readiness for concrete action remains low. The reaction is mostly limited to criticism of the authorities, memes, sarcasm, calls to send deputies and their relatives to the front, or demands to end the war. Only in isolated cases is there mention of leaving for Kazakhstan, looking for work at enterprises that provide draft deferments, legal ways of avoiding mobilization, or an intention to vote for "Yabloko" as a party that is associated with ending the war.

Drone and missile alerts once again became an almost daily reality for many regions during the week. The overall tone of the discussions has hardly changed compared with previous weeks.

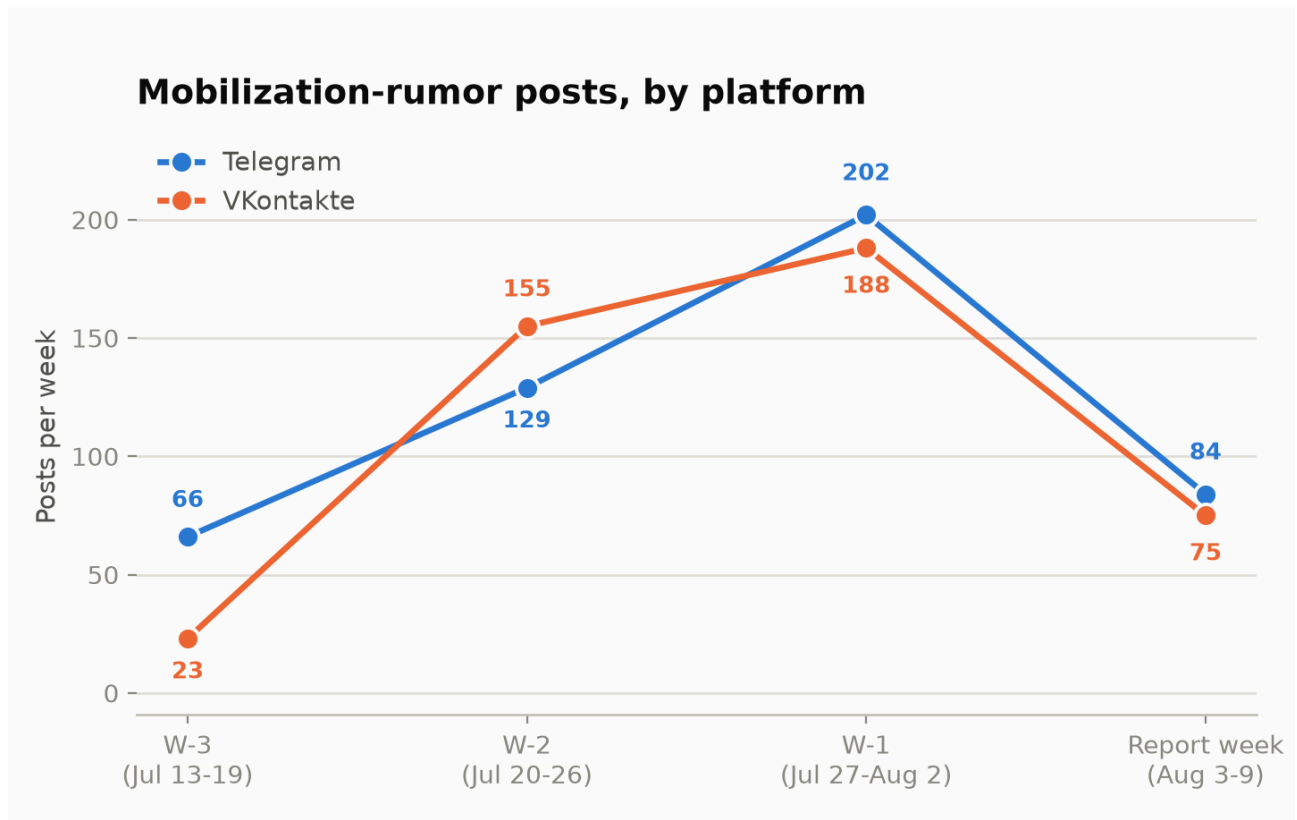
1. There will be NO mobilization, which means there WILL be

Statements in the media

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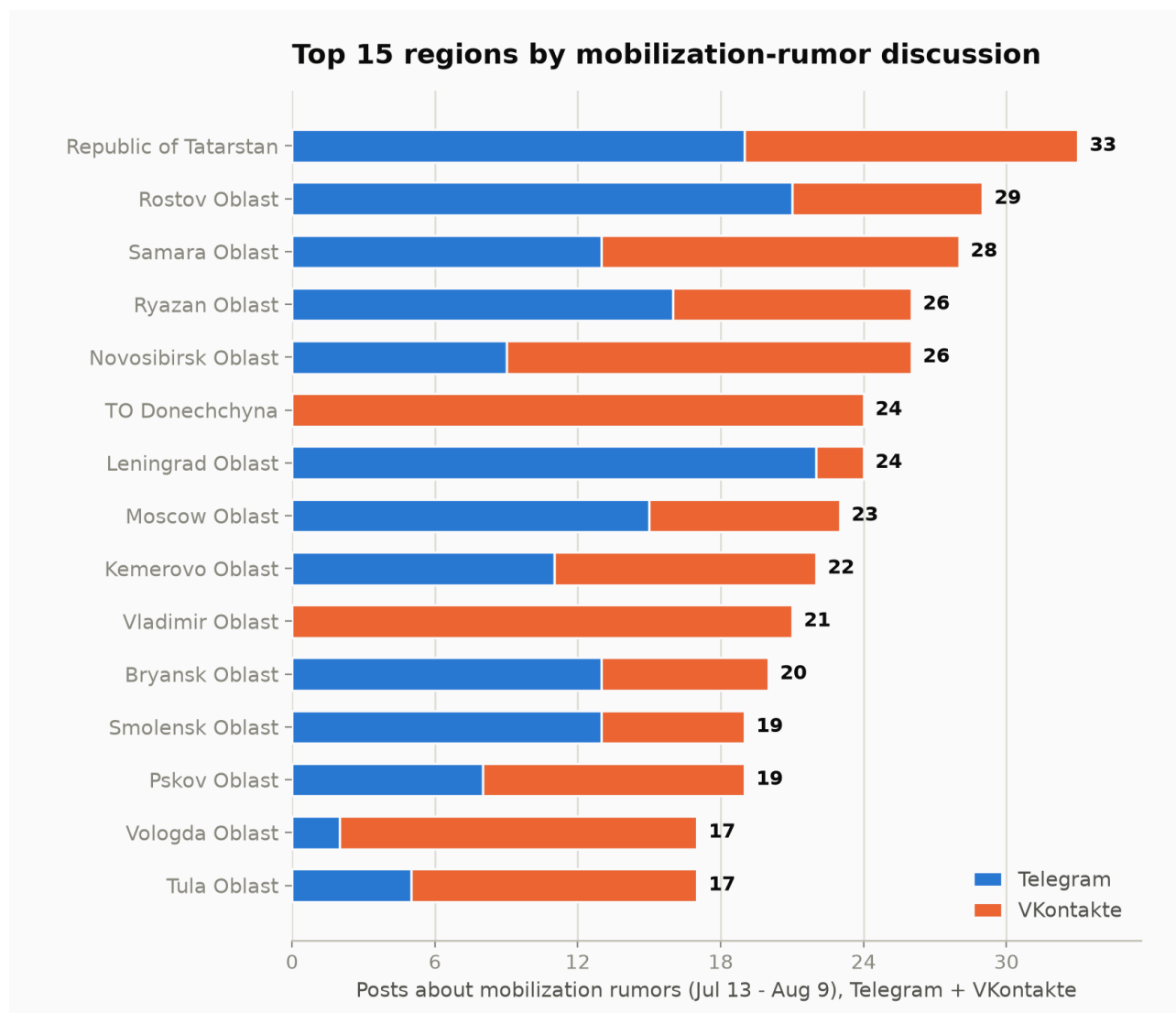
The peak of the topic came in the previous weeks. Back then [Dmitry Medvedev personally called the rumors about mobilization "the enemy's lies"](#), and before that [Putin signed a law](#) that opens up access to the civil registry office database for the Ministry of Defense and Rosgvardia.

In the reporting week the topic continued with [Putin signing a law that allows those convicted of drug smuggling, participation in a gang and participation in a criminal association to sign contracts with the Ministry of Defense](#) "during a period of mobilization or wartime". However, this news no longer caused a new surge of discussion. It rather reinforced the already formed skepticism about the state expanding its personnel options in case of mobilization.



Main discussions

In the regions studied, the topic of a possible new wave of mobilization is present unevenly. In the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, Magadan Oblast and the Temporarily Occupied Luhansk region there was not a single post about rumors of mobilization, while in all the other regions it was mentioned at least once on at least one of the platforms. The topic of mobilization also appears periodically in comments on news about the elections, the protracted war, personnel decisions, conscription, the dead and changes in legislation.



The through-line of all the discussions is an almost complete distrust of denials of a new mobilization by representatives of the authorities. Commentators constantly return to the experience of 2022, when mobilization was also denied shortly before it was announced. It is precisely this precedent that remains the main argument because of which even direct denials from the authorities do not remove the anxiety. Previous promises by the authorities, in particular on the retirement age, are also cited as an argument.

Kursk

"If our government promises something with the particle 'not', then you absolutely need to get ready for it" — July 28 at 22:30, ♥43

A noticeable part of the audience expects mobilization to be announced precisely after the elections. Comments suggest that unpopular decisions may be postponed until the end of the campaign, and that mobilization is most likely being planned for September–October. Another widespread reaction is a passive resignation: "after the elections we will find out".

Kursk

"let us come back to this post in October..." — July 28 at 22:31, ♥42

Tolyatti

"There is one small plus from the special military operation, that people have realized the government is full of crooks, and United Russia is very bad" — August 9 at 21:16, ♥31
↳ *"Vladislav, what, the elections are keeping you up at night, huh? Dreaming about Yabloko?" 🗳️"*

Additional grounds for suspicion about preparations for mobilization are changes in legislation and administrative measures — for example, the expansion of the possibilities of signing contracts with convicts, the operation of electronic registries, summonses to military enlistment offices to update records, the search for specialists in mobilization work, the transfer of additional information about citizens to state bodies, and an increase in the size of the army. Some commentators interpret this as the preparatory infrastructure for a hidden mobilization, in order to compensate for the shortage of volunteers without openly announcing a new wave.

St. Petersburg

(Putin signed a law on signing contracts with convicts)

"It is even frightening to imagine what kind of future awaits us." — August 5 at 22:19, ♥212

Samara

"Quite right, let the jailbirds do the fighting and the normal guys stay home" — August 5 at 10:49, ♥19

Despite the anxiety and distrust of the authorities' assurances, readiness for concrete action remains low. In most regions users do not discuss practical plans in case of mobilization. The reaction is mostly limited to criticism of the authorities, memes, sarcasm, calls to send deputies and their relatives to the front, or demands to end the war. Only in isolated cases is there mention of leaving for Kazakhstan, looking for work at enterprises that provide draft deferments, legal ways of avoiding mobilization, or an intention to vote for "Yabloko" as a party that is associated with ending the war.

St. Petersburg

"I hope that if there is a mobilization then people will stop staying silent" — July 26 at 9:34, ♥37

A separate factor is the limited nature of public discussion. In a number of regions there is noticeable deletion of comments and posts connected with mobilization topics, blocking of accounts and fear of speaking openly about mobilization. On top of that, pro-government accounts actively join the discussion, repeating the narrative about a sufficient number of volunteers and calling the rumors about mobilization an enemy provocation. Because of this, weak activity in some regions does not always mean an absence of concern.

Officials' statements about preparing for protracted hostilities and an economy on a "war footing"

Ambassador-at-large [of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Rodion Miroshnik](#) stated that Europe will continue to finance Ukraine, and that Russia therefore "needs to be ready for fairly long-term military action with a well-thought-out strategy". The news spread widely across the regions. The most popular post on Telegram gained about 450,000 views, and on VK up to 296,000.

The audience's reaction was predominantly sarcastic. Miroshnik's statement did not come as a surprise; it rather confirmed the already formed expectation that the war will drag on. Some commentators immediately linked the words of the Foreign Ministry representative with the rumors about a possible new wave of mobilization. The need to prepare for prolonged hostilities was perceived as one more indirect sign that the demand for human resources may persist for a long time.

Besides this, two opposite poles were present in the discussions at the same time. Part of the audience openly opposed the continuation of the war and spoke about the need to end it. Another took a harshly militant position and supported the continuation of hostilities. The threads in Crimean public groups were especially conflict-ridden, where arguments between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian commentators quickly turned into mutual insults.

Chelyabinsk

"Hit them hard and give us back our husbands, fathers and sons already!!!" — August 6 at 16:47, ♥250

Another notable statement of the week was [the words of Andrei Kolesnik, a deputy on the State Duma defense committee](#), that Russia "is exposed to a serious threat" and must switch to a war footing, and also intensify the massed nature of strikes on the territory of the "adversary". This is the same deputy whose statements denying a new mobilization were discussed two weeks earlier.

Unlike the Foreign Ministry statement about the need to prepare for protracted hostilities, this statement spread significantly less. Still, where Kolesnik's statement did provoke discussion, the reaction was noticeably sharper. Dissatisfaction with the deputy himself and with the political elite in general came to the fore. The most frequently repeated

demand was to send the deputies' children to the front and to let representatives of the authorities personally feel the consequences of the decisions they are calling for. This motif was repeated almost word for word in different regions and gathered some of the highest levels of support among the comments on the post.

Omsk

"United Russia, send your own children to the special military operation. Then you will finish it all quickly" — August 4 at 20:37, ♥158

Conclusion

Overall, the discussions show no signs of mass panic or of the population preparing for active resistance to a possible mobilization. Among part of the audience a stable distrust of official denials has formed, along with the expectation that a decision on a new wave may be taken after the elections. The essence of the public's reaction consists of passive waiting, anxiety, sarcasm and distrust of the authorities.

2. The week in Russian regional "VKontakte" and "Telegram"

Top discussions on Telegram and VKontakte

Another wave of drone and missile alerts, including a strike on the Wildberries warehouse in Yekaterinburg

Drone and missile alerts once again became an almost daily reality for many regions during the week. The overall tone of the discussions has hardly changed compared with previous weeks. Several separate lines of discussion are visible in the debates:

1. Fatigue from the sheer frequency of the announcements and anger at the inconsistency of the alert system, because different notification channels work with a delay or do not reach everyone. In Moscow Oblast, where alerts were announced several times a day, users were already joking that it would be simpler to report the moments when there is no danger than to warn about its appearance every single time.
2. The consequences of air defense operations. People discuss the risks of intercepting drones over populated areas and industrial facilities and argue about whether it is possible at all to avoid secondary destruction after air defense operations.
3. A stable duality of emotions, which has held for several weeks in a row, centered on gratitude to air defense crews for concrete protection and coexisting with total fatigue from the very fact that the need for such protection has become a daily norm.

Belgorod

"Moscow!!!! Hello!!!! We have losses among civilians every single day!!! Half of them are not even reported. What are we doing there? How much longer are we going to keep drawing red lines? Civilians are dying!!! Every resident of Belgorod already has a loss in the family or among those close to them. And not just one. For a mighty Nuclear power, we are somehow dragging our feet for a long time. What are we waiting for? Are we sparing the khokhols? Showing humanism? And do you not want to spare YOUR OWN people, to show humanism? People are dying for absolutely nothing!!!" — August 9 at 12:03, ♥198

Debris on a beach in Krasnodar Krai

On 3 August, debris from a downed drone fell on a beach in Arkhipo-Osipovka in Krasnodar Krai. In terms of the number of civilian casualties, this was the most serious event of the week. The news quickly spread beyond Kuban on both platforms.

1. The sharpest discussion unfolded around the very decision to travel on holiday to a region where air defense operates regularly. Some commentators accused parents of

irresponsibility, especially those who came with children knowing about the constant attacks. Another part of the audience sharply objected to such logic, calling it cynical: drones and debris fall not only on beaches but also on residential buildings, so it is already difficult to speak of obviously "safe" places in the country.

2. Separately, people argued about the circumstances of the tragedy itself. Residents of Kuban denied the widespread claims about a mass closure of beaches and stressed that the resort infrastructure continues to operate. Other commentators raised questions about the work of the air defense — why the drone was shot down over a place with a mass gathering of people and whether the fall of debris on the beach could have been avoided.

Lipetsk

"The work of the air defense is just f... Shooting things down in places where people gather is beyond idiocy" — August 3 at 18:00, ♥21

3. **The greatest emotional response went to the personal stories of those affected.** A post about an anesthesiologist from Rostov who was relaxing on the beach and immediately rushed to help the wounded in his shorts and flip-flops gained 778 likes. An even stronger reaction (927 likes) was provoked by the story of the father of a girl who was killed, who is in the "Special Military Operation" zone and whom relatives for some time did not dare to tell about his daughter's death. The very decision to hide the tragedy from him caused significant outrage.
4. The anti-war line was less widespread but also noticeable. In such comments the view was voiced that the consequences of the war should be borne by those who take the relevant decisions, and not by civilians and children who are on holiday at the sea.

Tolyatti

"The main thing is that grandpa with low social responsibility does not get bored without some action 😊" — August 3 at 14:55, ♥55

Lipetsk

"It is high time to introduce martial law" — August 4 at 0:52, ♥2

↳ *"Tatyana, it is high time for VVP to resign." — August 4 at 6:49, ♥8*

Wildberries and Ozon are moving warehouses to Kazakhstan

Deputy head of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mikhail Galuzin reported that Russia and Kazakhstan have begun integrating their marketplaces, and that Wildberries is already building 260,000 m² of warehouse space in Kazakhstan. Officially this was explained by agreements concluded even before the wave of attacks on the company's warehouses. In terms of the number of publications the topic was relatively small — 63 posts in 37 regions on Telegram and 42 posts in 30 regions on VK — but the geography of its spread turned out to be unusually broad.

Most often users talked about a possible loss of jobs in Russia. They counted up thousands of potential technicians, builders, drivers and loaders and assumed that the new facilities in Kazakhstan would hire local workers first and foremost, rather than Russians. They also feared that moving part of the logistics would lead to more expensive and slower delivery.

Some users denied the critical importance of marketplaces altogether, claiming that a "real patriot" can do without Wildberries and buy goods in ordinary shops.

Individual commentators directly linked the expansion of infrastructure in Kazakhstan with the security situation in Russia. For them this looked like an indirect admission that the state cannot guarantee the protection of large civilian logistics facilities. At the same time, that same week Wildberries itself denied that this was about moving its main capacity, saying it concerned only additional infrastructure.

Assassination attempt on the director of the manufacturer of the "Upyr" combat drones in Yekaterinburg

An explosive device went off under the car of Vladimir Tkachuk, director of the company "Uralsdronzavod", which produces "Upyr" combat drones. His driver-bodyguard was killed on the spot, and Tkachuk himself was taken to intensive care in serious condition. Investigators opened a criminal case into attempted murder.

Despite the local character of the event, the news noticeably spread beyond Sverdlovsk Oblast.

The most noticeable motif in the comments was the absence of security for a person of that level. People asked why the production of military goods is not protected at the state level, and why his address and personal data had become publicly available through the very publications about him. Sympathy is also present, especially in the occupied territories, where people knew Tkachuk personally. Commentators compared it with another high-profile attack two weeks earlier, at a banquet of an Aerospace Forces general in Moscow. They note that Tkachuk "was luckier", because only the bodyguard was killed, whereas in Chaika's case a son-in-law died and a daughter was left in serious condition in intensive care. There were also comments about why the director of a manufacturer of drones for the front drives an "enemy" Mercedes rather than a domestic car.

Update of the school curriculum from 1 September

The Ministry of Education announced a comprehensive update of the school curriculum. Social studies will be kept only for grades 9-11, the number of history hours will be increased with a single list of topics for all schools, a new subject "Spiritual and Moral Culture of Russia" will be introduced, and Basics of Life Safety will be split into two separate courses.

The discussions are dominated by concern that the new subject will squeeze out basic disciplines without a corresponding reduction in the overall workload, and by skepticism about who exactly will teach "spiritual and moral culture" given the current staffing situation in schools. People also contrasted the current curriculum with the Soviet one, which some commentators recall as less overloaded and freer.

Petrol fever

Petrol shortages and queues at filling stations grew by 81% in terms of reposts this week and spread from 44 to 61 regions. In Altai Krai people described queues that started back

out on the highway; in Orenburg Oblast they complained about fuel without a quality certificate and with an elevated sulfur content; in Krasnodar Krai they recorded outages with no set date for supplies to resume. In Chelyabinsk and Leningrad Oblasts, the topic of low-quality "Euro-2" class petrol, which eats away paint and breaks the engines of Chinese cars, was gaining momentum.

Voronezh

"There was a huge queue at the monument this morning. Same at the 'Grad' yesterday evening. At the 'Uchitelsky' the filling station is already closed now, there is no petrol. And in the morning there was a big queue. Where are we supposed to fill up on the way to work?! Where is any of this easing off? Hello? And September has not even started yet. It will be really fun when everyone comes back to the city." — August 7 at 15:00, ♥132

Lipetsk

"and has the government by any chance not allowed engines to be repaired at their expense? maybe the government is going to allocate money for these repairs? Or f... just keep working to pay your taxes and repairs and shove them down your throats" — August 6 at 19:44, ♥16

Methodology

What this project is. Systematic monitoring of sentiment in Russian regions — with a focus on critical and negative posts as an indicator of what irritates, frightens or outrages people. The conclusions rest on two parallel sources from monitoring regional VKontakte groups and Telegram.

VKontakte and Telegram. Automated data collection in regional Russian communities on VKontakte (536 groups) and Telegram (428 channels) — regional news channels, local public groups, oblast media, local "chat bots" with audiences ranging from several thousand to hundreds of thousands of subscribers. Coverage — all Russian regions and the occupied territories of Ukraine. Observations by regional analysts were used in addition.

Quotes in the report text are given verbatim.