
CENTRAL ASIA WRESTLES WITH HUGE INFLUX OF RUSSIANS FLEEING ARMY DUTY

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As Russians escaping a partial military mobilization in their homeland drank their morning coffee in a cinema that opened its doors for them in northwestern Kazakhstan, Central Asia was waking up to yet more fallout from Moscows bloody war in Ukraine.

Almost a week into the drive for soldiers that Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on September 21 in response to a tide-shifting Ukrainian counteroffensive, sightings of Russians wandering the streets of cities throughout the region with backpacks and lost expressions have become commonplace.

So, too, have lengthening lines at the state borders that Russian citizens can still cross without visas, as reports that Moscow may soon move to close off the exits -- at least to men of fighting age -- deepen the panic.

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