

The National Center for Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading
Treatment or Punishment and
the Center for Social Research and Development

The 2023 Survey Report

“Perceptions of Kyrgyz Conscripts on Their Rights”

Bishkek, 2023

The 2023 National Report on Results of the Standardized Perceptions Survey on the Rights of Conscripts – Kyrgyzstan

Introduction

The Standardized Perceptions Survey on the Rights of Conscripts was initiated by the Geneva Center for Security Sector Reform, DCAF (www.dcaf.ch) and first launched in Kyrgyzstan in 2022. The aim of the survey is to monitor how the civil, social, and economic rights of conscripts are ensured in the country. The survey was also carried out in 2023 to see the changing and concurrent trends. The Center for Social Innovation and Development administered the survey while the data was collected by the National Center on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, whose staff have access to military units in which conscripts serve. The survey was funded by the DCAF.

Methodology

The survey questions were developed by the DCAF and piloted in Kyrgyzstan last year. The same standardized survey questions were used in 2023. The survey was intended for current conscripts, who have already served at least two to three months of their mandatory military service.

This survey was anonymous so that no participant's responses could be traced back to them. All conscripts who participated in the survey were informed of their anonymity. This also helped to reduce bias and ensure that conscripts were free to express their opinion. Indeed, conscripts filled out the survey without anyone overseeing their responses. Participants completed the survey in their individual capacity, based on their own experiences, views, and perceptions.

Surveys were completed on paper because conscripts in Kyrgyzstan are prohibited from using mobile phones and the Internet.

Overall, 170 conscripts took part in the survey in 2023, while 9 surveys were found to be incomplete. Thus, surveys of 161 conscripts were analyzed. Regarding the geographical coverage, conscripts from both new and previous-year military units took part in the survey. Military units located in Balykchy, Issyk-Kul province, and Koi-Tash, close to Bishkek, were included in the survey from the previous year. This year, military units from the remote province of Batken, as well as Osh and Talas provinces, were included, expanding the geographical coverage. As a whole, conscripts from seven military units located in both the northern and southern provinces listed below took part in the survey:

- Koi-Tash village, Chuy province
- Balykchy town, Issyk-Kul province
- Kara-Kol city, Issyk-Kul province
- Kok-Oi village, Talas province
- Osh city, Osh province
- Muras village, Batken province
- Buzhum village, Batken province.

The demographical data of respondents, including their educational background, ethnicity, and religion are provided below.

Section 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

Total number of respondents:	161														
Period of service of respondents:	Spring conscription – 64.60% Fall conscription – 35.40%														
Total duration of compulsory military service:	1 year (12 months)														
Institution of service (e.g., Armed Forces, Ministry of Interior, etc.)	Border Service – 18.01% Ministry of Defence – 81.99%														
Age:	<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Age</th><th>%</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>18</td><td>36.02</td></tr><tr><td>19</td><td>26.71</td></tr><tr><td>20</td><td>16.77</td></tr><tr><td>21</td><td>5.59</td></tr><tr><td>22</td><td>3.11</td></tr><tr><td>23</td><td>4.97</td></tr></tbody></table>	Age	%	18	36.02	19	26.71	20	16.77	21	5.59	22	3.11	23	4.97
Age	%														
18	36.02														
19	26.71														
20	16.77														
21	5.59														
22	3.11														
23	4.97														

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>24</td> <td>1.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not indicated</td> <td>4.97</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total:</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </table> <p>The average age range of conscripts is 19 years</p>	24	1.86	Not indicated	4.97	Total:	100								
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Level of Education	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level of education:</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Primary education</td> <td>9,32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secondary education</td> <td>66,46</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vocational education</td> <td>16,77</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bachelor degree</td> <td>6,83</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Master degree</td> <td>0,62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total:</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Level of education:	%	Primary education	9,32	Secondary education	66,46	Vocational education	16,77	Bachelor degree	6,83	Master degree	0,62	Total:	100
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Religious Affiliation	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Religious Affiliation</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Muslim</td> <td>99.38</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christian</td> <td>1.62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total:</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Religious Affiliation	%	Muslim	99.38	Christian	1.62	Total:	100						
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Uzbek	1,24														
Total	100														
Origin (Are you from a major city or from a village/rural area/countryside):	<input type="checkbox"/> Major/ larger city – 29.19% <input type="checkbox"/> Village or Rural area – 70.81%														

The subsequent chapters present the survey results, starting with findings regarding the civil and political rights of conscripts, including freedom from torture and forced labour. The discussion then shifts to socioeconomic rights, such as access of conscripts to accommodation, medical care, nutrition, and rest.

Section 2: Human Rights during mandatory military service:

2.1. Civil and Political Rights:

❖ Torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and right to life

Question	Average value	Percentage of responses by value									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Were you informed by military authorities about what constitutes and how to identify instances of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment during your service?		7,45	0,00	6,21	3,73	13,04	1,24	6,21	5,59	4,35	52,17
Were you informed about appropriate reporting and complaint procedures in the cases of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment during your service?		7,45	1,86	2,48	4,35	11,18	2,48	4,97	6,21	6,21	52,80
Did you or other servicemen experience torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment during your service?		69,57	8,07	3,11	2,48	4,35	2,48	4,35	0,62	2,48	2,48
Did you feel like if torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment occurred during your service, you would be able to report it or make a complaint against the officer or serviceman?		24,84	4,35	1,86	1,86	9,94	0,62	4,35	2,48	3,11	46,58
During your service did you or other servicemen think about committing or commit suicide?		85,71	2,48	0,62	1,24	1,86	1,24	0,00	4,97	0,62	1,24
Did you feel like the military authorities took sufficient precautions to protect your life?		10,56	1,24	3,73	1,86	3,11	0,62	4,35	4,35	6,83	63,35
Did you feel like the distress and suffering that you experienced during your service corresponded to the actual demands of that service?		8,70	1,24	2,48	1,86	15,53	2,48	4,35	4,97	3,11	55,28

In cases when you or other servicemen around you were mistreated, did you feel like the following factors played a role in being a target of mistreatment?

Factors	%		
	Yes	No	Not answered
Age:	2,48	93,17	4,35
Status in the hierarchy in the military unit	1,24	93,79	4,97
Level of Education	1,24	93,79	4,97
Ethnicity	0,62	94,41	4,97
Religious affiliation	0,62	94,41	4,97
Language spoken:	0,62	94,41	4,97
Rural or urban origin:	0,62	94,41	4,97
Other factors (please specify):	None		

Did you feel like if torture, inhuman or degrading treatment occurred during your service, you would be able to report it or make a complaint against the officer or serviceman?

1 (No, such a procedure was not a real option for me)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (Yes, I would be encouraged to report it)
24.84	4.35	1.86	1.24	9.94	0.62	4.97	2.48	3.11	46.58

If you were to report or make a complaint about an instance of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, would you feel like:

	Yes, %	No, %
There would be an investigation into your complaint?	58.39	41.61
The authority investigating and assessing the complaint would be competent?	55.28	44.72
The investigation of the complaint would be prompt?	59.63	40.37
The investigation of the complaint would be impartial?	60.87	39.13
Sufficient safeguards would be provided to you (and witnesses) to ensure that you are protected from negative consequences as a result of making the complaint?	52.17	47.83
The officer or servicemen found guilty of misconduct would be punished?	59.01	40.99
You could receive psychological support to help you cope with that experience?	57.14	42.86
You could receive proper medical support if needed?	60.25	39.75
Your family members/relatives will be immediately informed of this case?	58.39	41.61

Analysis:

Key observations:

(Describe key observations from the results of the survey – e.g., highest, and lowest values, high or low deviation, etc.)

The majority of conscripts, or 86.59%, were not subject to torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment during their military service. This percentage is comparable to that of the previous year (2022) when 89.28% of conscripts reported not having experienced maltreatment. Nevertheless, the remaining 13.41% of conscripts in 2023 experienced some level of torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment, indicating the presence of violence in the Armed Forces. In addition, only 57.14% of conscripts would file a complaint against the officer or serviceman in cases of torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment. This means that nearly half of the remaining respondents (42.86%) would not report such instances. The problem is that 41.61 % of conscripts do not believe their complaint will be investigated, 44.72 % do not believe that the authority investigating and assessing the complaint will be competent, and 40.37 % do not believe that the investigation will be prompt and impartial (39.13%). In addition, roughly half of the conscripts (47.83%) do not believe that adequate protections would be provided to shield them from negative consequences as a result of filing the complaint. Another significant factor preventing conscripts from filing a complaint is that 40.99% of them do not believe that an officer or serviceman found guilty of misconduct would be punished. It indicates that conscripts have a high level of mistrust for the investigation process

	<p>and its outcome. Comparatively, in 2023, the level of skepticism in the investigation process was marginally higher, whereas in 2022, between 30 and 36% of respondents exhibited this level of mistrust.</p> <p>Moreover, about half of the conscripts (42.86%) do not anticipate receiving psychological support to help them cope with the experience of torture, and inhuman or degrading treatment. This percentage has increased since 2022, when it was 36.36%. In addition, in 2023, a greater proportion of respondents (39.75%) did not expect to receive medical assistance in cases of maltreatment than in 2022 (20.84%).</p> <p>In 2023, 8.07% of conscripts had suicidal thoughts, which was a significant increase from 2022, when the rate was only 1.79%. This is a worrisome trend and suicides continue to be a problem for the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan.</p>
<p>Relationship with demographic data: <i>(Describe any trends and correlations that can be observed when comparing responses with reference to demographic data in Section 1 – e.g., is there any relationship between ethnicity and the perceptions that conscripts reporting experiencing mistreatment)</i></p>	<p>Neither ethnicity, religion, language, or education level were considered by conscripts as factors leading to torture, inhuman and degrading treatment. On the other side, the dominant part of respondents were ethnic Kyrgyz (96.98%) and Muslims (99.38%), and the Kyrgyz language was the mother tongue for 95.65% of conscripts. Consequently, the minimal presence of minority groups eliminated the potential for conflict. According to the conscripts, age was viewed as the factor contributing to being the target of mistreatment. The thing is that 2/3 of respondents who reported being mistreated were aged between 18 and 19 years.</p>
<p>Discussion: <i>(Please explain how the data can be understood with respect to the national context – e.g., legislation, cultural aspects, etc. Is this a persistent problem or are the findings new, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Similar to the situation in 2022, the vast majority of conscripts (86.59%) did not experience torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment in 2023. This is supported by the results of discussions conducted during the 2022 Conscripts Survey Results Presentation held on August 19, 2023, in Bishkek. At this event, participants from the Ministry of Defence, Border Services, Internal Troops of the Internal Ministry, and Ministry of Emergency admitted that the level of violence has begun to decline among conscripts in comparison to the situation 5 to 10 years ago. As a major step to decrease the violence among conscripts, the Kyrgyz cabinet introduced changes to the national legislation in 2006 reducing the conscription period from 18 months to 12.¹ This allowed recruits only from the same conscription period (fall or spring) to serve together and prevented older conscripts from serving with younger ones. It surely had a positive effect on reducing bullying and hazing among conscripts.</p> <p>A negative trend observed in the 2023 survey is that only two-thirds of soldiers (72.67%) know how to report and file a complaint in cases of mistreatment by other servicemen. This is a decrease from the 2022 survey when 87% of conscripts were informed of complaint submission mechanisms. The lower awareness in 2023 could be attributed to the addition of new military units to the survey in 2023. In any case, these statistics indicate that every seventh soldier in the Kyrgyz army is unaware of his rights with regard to the complaint procedures. In addition, it is more difficult for conscripts to file complaints with independent human rights institutions such as the Ombudsman Office or the National Center for the Prevention of Torture. The issue is that conscripts are prohibited from using their mobile phones during their 12-month military service to be able to report by phone or online via the Internet.</p> <p>Low levels of conscripts' confidence in the investigation process continued to be a problem. It was also regarded as an issue last year. Specifically, in 2023, nearly half of the conscripts (42.86%) indicated that they would be reluctant to file a complaint in cases of mistreatment, and the percentage of skepticism was found to be higher in 2023. This suggests that investigating authorities are not always transparent, instances of impartial investigations are either rare or not widely publicized. Another obstacle is that under current national law, conscripts and military officers can only file complaints with their direct superiors. This often discourages them from</p>

¹ Ibid

	<p>submitting complaints so as not to harm their relationships with their superiors. In addition, it appears that the restrictive military environment and traditional military culture do not prompt conscripts to complain.</p> <p>Moreover, unlike in many other countries, Kyrgyzstan does not have a Military Ombudsman. There is a unit within the Office of the Ombudsman that handles complaints from military personnel, including conscripts. The National Centre also serves all citizens. Both institutions conduct regular monitoring visits to military units and maintain 24-hour hotlines. However, the Military Ombudsman would encourage more proactive complaint submission by military personnel and a more targeted resolution of military personnel's rights. All of these factors call for the improvement of the complaint submission mechanisms both for conscripts and military officers.</p> <p>According to the 2023 survey, quite a large number of conscripts and their servicemen thought about committing suicide. The high rate of suicide among conscripts, which is not decreasing, shows the existence of violence among conscripts in Kyrgyzstan. According to the Prosecutor's Office, 10 soldiers committed suicide in 2020 and 2021.² In 2014, there were 6 suicides, in 2015 – 6 such cases, 2016 – 2, 2017 - 2, and in 2018, there were no such cases.³</p> <p>Despite the fact that the Ministry of Defense (MoD) instituted the position of psychologist for all military units in 2015, 42.86% of conscripts reported not expecting to receive psychological support to cope with the experience of torture or inhuman treatment or punishment. According to an interview with one of the military officers, only approximately 70% of military units employ a psychologist.⁴ The issue is that there is a scarcity of psychologists in the local market, and military psychologists are not trained in national education institutions. Moreover, many military psychologists require capacity-building and retraining. Overall, the psychological support system within the military sector of Kyrgyzstan needs improvement.</p>
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❖ **Freedom of expression**

Question	Average value	Percentage of responses by value									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did the authorities inform you how you can and cannot express yourself (including virtually) during your service?		6,21	3,11	1,86	1,24	7,45	3,11	5,59	8,70	2,48	60,25
Was it clear to you how you are or are not allowed to communicate and express yourself (including virtually) during your service?		4,35	1,86	1,24	3,73	6,83	3,73	5,59	3,11	5,59	63,98
Did you feel like your freedom of expression was restricted beyond what you would consider reasonable during your service?		46,58	6,21	4,35	2,48	13,66	7,45	4,97	2,48	1,24	10,56

² <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/31968499.html>. Also in the 2022 National Report on Results of Standardized Perceptions Survey on the Rights of Conscripts – Kyrgyzstan, available at: [Отчет по результатам опроса солдат срочной военной службы относительно обеспечения их прав \(npm.kg\)](#)

³ The Observance of the Military Personnel's Rights in the Kyrgyz Republic: The Report of the National Center for Prevention of Torture, Bishkek, 2018, Available at: <http://npm.kg/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Soblyudenie-prav-voennosluzhashhih-v-uchrezhdeniyah-Vooruzhennyh-sil-KR-2018g.pdf>

⁴ Interview with a psychologist working in the military unit, September 2023, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Analysis:	
Key observations:	The majority of conscripts (80,13%) were informed how they can and cannot express themselves during their military service. This rate was a bit higher in 2022 when approx. 90% of conscripts reported receiving information from military authorities on how to communicate and express themselves. Besides, 26,70% of soldiers believed that their freedom of expression was restricted beyond what they deemed reasonable. In 2022, a higher number of conscripts (33.93%) stated that the environment for freedom of expression in the armed forces was restrictive.
Relationship with demographic data: <i>(e.g., did conscripts of rural origin perceive their freedom of expression to be unreasonably restricted more often?)</i>	There was a correlation between the urban/rural origins of conscripts and the freedom of expression. 58%, or more than half of urban conscripts, reported that their freedom of expression was restricted. The dominant majority of rural conscripts indicated that their freedom of expression was not limited beyond reasonable. The level of education was found to be another correlation. More than 70% of respondents with Bachelor's and Master's degrees noted that their freedom of expression was restricted beyond what they deemed reasonable during military service.
Discussion:	<p>The servicemembers' right to freedom of expression and information is not the same as their civilian counterparts. It is strictly regulated in the armed forces in Kyrgyzstan. Pursuant to the Law on Status of Military Servicemen, military personnel enjoy citizens' rights and freedoms but with restrictions due to the requirements of military service.⁵ Article 6 of this Law stipulates that military servicemen are guaranteed freedom of speech and press, freedom of opinion and expression, but only under the condition of maintaining the state and military secrets, as well as the confidentiality of correspondence and telephone conversations.⁶ It means the freedom of expression of conscripts in Kyrgyzstan is categorized as a limited right.</p> <p>Besides, Article 24 of the Law on Status of Military Servicemen stipulates that servicemen are prohibited from disclosing state, military, official, and other secret information protected by the national legislation, which has become known to them in connection with the performance of their military duties.⁷ For this purpose, it is banned for conscripts to use mobile phones during their entire military service (12 months). Thus, they do not have access to mass or social media outlets to express their opinions. Besides, they cannot publicly express their views via TV, radio, or other mass media without the prior consent of their superior commanders. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) has internal publications (newspapers, bulletins, and journals) where soldiers can express their thoughts. However, there is strong censorship in these publications. In addition, these publications are mostly circulated internally within the MoD.</p> <p>According to the national legislation, military personnel, including conscripts, are prohibited from participating in election campaigns by running for office or attending rallies. Additionally, they cannot express their support for a particular candidate. Conscripts participate in national and municipal elections and referendums as voters. The</p>

⁵ Article 1, Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Status of Military Servicemen, Available at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/817?cl=ru-ru>

⁶ Article 6, Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Status of Military Service, Available at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/817?cl=ru-ru>

⁷ Article 24, Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Status of Military Service, Available at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/817?cl=ru-ru>

	commanders of military units submit the list of conscripts prior to election day to the Election Commission in order for the conscripts to be included on the voter list. ⁸ Besides, the commanders shall, no later than 3 days before election day, submit to the Election Commission a list of conscripts, who will be on duty on the election day to ensure the possibility of voting outside the voting room. In addition, servicemen, including conscripts, cannot act as election observers both at the local and national elections. ⁹ They are ineligible to serve on election commissions.
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❖ **Freedom of assembly and association**

Question	Average value	Percentage of responses by value									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Were you informed by the military authorities about your freedom of assembly and association (including virtual one) and restrictions thereto during your service?		7,45	1,24	3,11	3,11	7,45	5,59	4,97	3,73	8,70	54,66
Was it clear to you how you are and are not allowed to meet (including virtually) with other servicemen outside of your tasks and duties in your location of placement?		6,83	2,48	2,48	2,48	8,70	1,24	4,35	3,73	6,21	61,49
During your service did you feel like your freedom of assembly and association was restricted beyond what you would consider normal and proportionate to safeguard military discipline?		47,83	7,45	1,86	3,11	9,32	6,21	6,83	3,11	2,48	11,80

Analysis:	
Key observations:	77.55% of conscripts (responses spanning from 1 to 5) indicated that military authorities instructed them on their rights and restrictions regarding the freedom of assembly and association while serving. This means that the remaining 22.55% of respondents do not know or know little about the information in this field. Last year, a higher proportion of respondents (85.71%) were aware of their rights and restrictions. Moreover, 30.43% of soldiers believe that their freedom of assembly and association was restricted beyond what they deemed to be normal and proportional. In 2022, nearly the same proportion of conscripts (31.54%) shared this viewpoint.
Relationship with demographic data: (e.g., did conscripts with specific religious affiliations perceive their freedom of assembly to be unreasonably restricted more often?)	A correlation was visible when comparing the urban and rural origin of residents, with 52% of urban respondents reporting that their right to freedom of assembly and association was limited. The level of education also showed a correlation. More than half of those with Bachelor's and Master's degrees believed that their freedom of assembly and association was restricted beyond what would be considered normal and proportional in order to protect military discipline.

⁸ Articles 4.1-4.8, Regulation on Ensuring the Electoral Rights of Citizens of Certain Categories during Elections and Referendums of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted by the Central Election Commission on November 2016, Available at: https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/npacik/Polojeniya_CIK_KRBSHkny_n_Joboloru/polozhenie-ob-obespechenii-izbiratelnyh-prav-grazhdan-otdelnyh-kategorij-pri-provedenii-vyborov-i-referendumov-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki/

⁹ Law on the Election of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and Members of Parliament (Jogorku Kenesh). Available at: [Конституционный Закон КР от 2 июля 2011 года № 68 "О выборах Президента Кыргызской Республики и депутатов Жогорку Кенеша Кыргызской Республики" \(minjust.gov.kg\)](http://konstitucionnyj.zakon.kp/ot-2-iyulya-2011-goda-no-68-o-vyborax-prezidenta-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki-i-deputatov-zhogorku-kenesha-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki)

Discussion:	<p>The national legislation (Law on Status of Military Servicemen) bans all military personnel, including conscripts from being a member of a political party or political association pursuing political goals.¹⁰ It is also prohibited for them to speak in favor of a political party. This tradition of the political neutrality of military personnel has its origins in the Soviet Union when the Communist Party dominated the military sector. The Communist Party simply did not want the military officers to exert control over the party, so it made the military sector subordinate to the party.</p> <p>The Law on Status of Military Servicemen bans servicemen from taking part in strikes, demonstrations, or protests. Servicemen cannot join trade unions. Furthermore, the establishment and operation of religious organizations are prohibited in military units.¹¹ Yet, members of religious groups, who cannot serve in the army due to their religious beliefs (<i>e.g.</i>, <i>Jehovah's Witnesses</i>) are allowed to choose the alternative conscription service. Consequently, the legislation intends to protect the rights of religious groups, including minorities, while within the military service, the activity of religious groups is prohibited. It is also prohibited to have a mosque or church within the military units, but there are still prayer rooms for Muslims in some military units.</p>
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❖ **Prohibition of forced labour**

Was there any work that you have conducted during your compulsory military service that was not of a purely military character?

%	%
Yes 13.66	No 86.34

In case you conducted any work that was not of a purely military character, was this part of your training scheme during your service?

%	%	%	%	%
No, it was unrelated to training	I experienced both instances when it was part of training and when it was not	Yes, it was always part of the training	Not applicable	Not answered
49,69	2,48	18,63	21,74	7,45

How frequently did you conduct work that was not of purely military character and unrelated to training?

¹⁰ Article 24, Law on Status of Military Servicemen adopted in 1992, Available at: [Закон РК от 1 июля 1992 года N 930-XII "О статусе военнослужащих" \(minjust.gov.kg\)](#)

¹¹ Article 7, Law on Status of Military Servicemen adopted in 1992, Available at: [Закон РК от 1 июля 1992 года N 930-XII "О статусе военнослужащих" \(minjust.gov.kg\)](#)

%	%	%	%	%
Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
1,86	1,86	0,00	11,80	84,47

Please list the types of tasks that you conducted during your service which were not of a purely military character:	1. Cleaning barracks	9 mentions
	2. Electrical work	1
	3. Cleaning of the territory of a military unit	1
	4. Painting a non-military car	1

Analysis:	
Key observations:	<p>The majority of conscripts (86.34%) reported that they did not perform any non-military work during their service, which is an improvement over last year's results. In 2022, this percentage was lower, at 79.76%, with 20.24% of soldiers reporting involvement in non-military work, whereas in 2023, only 13.66% of conscripts indicated the same. In terms of the frequency of non-military work, 11.80% of respondents reported they were involved in such work rarely, 1.86% frequently, and 1.86% very frequently.</p> <p>When conscripts were asked to list these non-military tasks, barracks cleaning was mentioned the most (9 times). There was one mention of electrical work, cleaning a military unit's outdoor area, and painting a non-military vehicle.</p>
Relationship with demographic data:	There was no correlation between conscripts' age, urban/rural origin, education level, religious affiliation, or ethnic background and forced labour.
Discussion:	<p>The survey results show that the non-military activities performed by conscripts included cleaning barracks and outdoor territory of military units, performing electrical work, and painting a non-military vehicle. The national legislation, specifically the Law on the Charter of the Armed Forces Internal Service, stipulates that it is the daily responsibility of conscripts to clean barracks and territory of the military units (Article 232).¹² This law obliges the conscripts to keep all their premises, as well as the territory of a military unit clean. This service is not outsourced in Kyrgyzstan like it is in other developed countries as it is costly. In addition, the military units are regarded as places of secrecy, and as such, access to them is restricted to third parties such as outsourcing companies. This law also prescribes cleaning and tidying up the adjacent streets, which are close to the military units/camps (Article 192).¹³ Hence, this task (cleaning barracks and outdoor territory) is not regarded as forced labor.</p> <p>Painting a non-military vehicle is unquestionably deemed extraneous work; this was the only instance revealed in the 2023 survey. It demonstrates that the extent of such work is minimal in Kyrgyzstan, as was confirmed by the 2022 survey, in which no non-military cases were found. With the exception of this case, it can be concluded that</p>

¹² Article 232, Law on the Charter of the Armed Forces' Internal Service. Available at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/125?cl=ru-ru>

¹³ Article 192, Law on the Charter of the Armed Forces' Internal Service. Available at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/125?cl=ru-ru>

	conscripts did not participate in forced labor in Kyrgyzstan.
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❖ **Prohibition of Discrimination and Right to respect for private and family life**

Were you aware of any instances when you or another serviceman was discriminated against due to their...?

	Yes	No
Age:	9,94	90,06
Status in the hierarchy of the military unit:	9,94	90,06
Level of Education:	6,83	93,17
Ethnicity:	6,21	93,79
Religious affiliation:	6,21	93,79
Language:	6,83	93,17
Rural or urban origin:	8,07	91,93
Economic situation:	6,21	93,79

Question	Average value	Percentage of responses by value									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Were you able to retain regular and sufficient in-person/physical contact with your family and loved ones during your service?		7,45	1,86	3,11	2,48	13,04	4,97	7,45	4,97	4,35	50,31
Were you able to retain regular and sufficient virtual contact with your family and loved ones during your service?		11,18	3,11	4,97	7,45	8,07	6,83	5,59	8,70	4,97	39,13
Did you feel like the authorities unjustifiably restricted you from being in contact with your family and loved ones during your service?		6,83	4,35	4,97	3,73	9,94	3,73	1,86	1,24	0,62	62,73
Were you aware of instances when the authorities interfered with your or another conscript's correspondence?		7,45	4,35	2,48	1,86	6,21	1,24	2,48	1,24	0,62	72,05

Analysis:	
Key observations:	<p>More than 90% of respondents indicated that socio-demographic characteristics of soldiers were not the basis for discrimination. In particular, 93.79% of them reported that they were unaware of any instances in which they or another service member had been subjected to discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity, religion, or economic status. Nearly the same percentage of soldiers (93.17%) reported that neither language nor urban/rural origin prompted discrimination. More conscripts (9.94%) acknowledged that the military status hierarchy and level of education were the causes of discriminatory attitudes. Responses were a little more optimistic in 2022 when 95–98% of conscripts claimed there was no discrimination against soldiers based on their social backgrounds.</p> <p>Regarding the right to respect for private and family life, 72.05% of soldiers (responses spanning from 6 to 10)</p>

	<p>stated that they maintained regular in-person contact with their families while serving. This implies that around one-third of conscripts had difficulty sustaining adequate family contact. Last year, more conscripts (79.74%, responses ranging from 6 to 10) were able to maintain regular and sufficient physical contact with their relatives.</p> <p>More conscripts (34,78%) were unable to maintain consistent virtual contact with their families. In 2022, this figure was only 22.05%, so in 2023, more service members had restrictions on virtual communication with their relatives. 70,18% of soldiers (with answers ranging from 6 to 10) said that the rules prohibiting them from communicating with their relatives were unjustifiably restricted. More conscripts in 2022 (80%) felt this way.</p>
<p>Relationship with demographic data:</p>	<p>There was a correlation between the level of education and instances of discrimination. The majority of those who were aware of discrimination against conscripts held a secondary education. Furthermore, none of the ethnic minorities reported experiencing discrimination based on their ethnicity. All of those who reported being aware of instances of discrimination based on ethnicity were Kyrgyz, the ethnic majority. Besides, none of the religious minorities experienced discrimination on the basis of their religious affiliation. All those, who were aware of such instances belonged to the religious majority, i.e. they were Muslims.</p> <p>The vast majority of respondents who said "yes" to the question of whether authorities unjustifiably restricted conscripts' contact with their families during their service had secondary education. The majority of those with a Bachelor's or Master's degree reported that authorities do not restrict their communication with family members. In addition, 57.78% of urban conscripts had the same opinion.</p>
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>As stated above, 96.98% of the interlocutors belonged to one ethnic group of Kyrgyz, 99.38% were Muslims, and 95,65% spoke one language of Kyrgyz. Such domination prevented discrimination based on these three criteria. The survey results show that 9.94% of discrimination was motivated by the military status hierarchy and level of education. As all soldiers were from the same conscription and held the same rank, this suggests that discrimination was instigated by military personnel with higher ranks. Last year, religious affiliation-based discrimination was identified as the most major form of discrimination, with 5.35% of respondents admitting to it. This was not an issue this year, as almost all respondents, with the exception of 0.62%, were Muslims. In general, as less than 6 to 10% of conscripts reported being aware of discrimination cases based on socio-demographic characteristics, the scope of discriminatory attitudes is not widespread. Nonetheless, such incidents continue to occur, and military authorities need to conduct preventative measures.</p> <p>Despite the fact that military service entails numerous restrictions, including the right to respect for private and family life, nearly one-third of respondents admitted that these restrictions were not justifiable when it came to maintaining communication with their relatives. As conscripts from remote areas (e.g., 2 military units from Batken province and one from Karakol in Issyk-Kul province) participated in the survey, the tangible geographical distance between them and their families seemingly prevented them from maintaining regular in-person contact. More conscripts (34,78%) were unable to maintain consistent virtual contact with their families. The prohibition on the use of mobile phones during military service prevents conscripts from maintaining regular contact with their families. In Kyrgyzstan, it is customary for soldiers to use the mobile phones of military unit commanders to contact their families, when necessary. This issue is not regulated by the law and at the full discretion of the commander's will to allow or disallow conscripts to virtually talk to their relatives, including the frequency and</p>

	lengths of such phone calls.
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2.2. Economic and Social Rights:

❖ Right to decent and adequate housing and accommodation

Did the accommodation during your service provide for:

<i>I</i>	Yes, %	No, %
Adequate lighting:	86,34	13,66
Adequate ventilation:	83,85	16,15
Sufficient heating:	85,71	14,29
Sufficient space for those residing there:	88,82	11,18
Adequate bathing and toilet facilities:	87,58	12,42

Was the accommodation:

	Yes, %	No, %
Clean:	93,79	6,21
In good state of repair:	89,44	10,56
Adequately furnished:	85,71	14,29
Separate from toilet facilities from the sleeping area:	91,93	8,07

Analysis:

Key observations:	<p>The majority of conscripts expressed contentment with the housing facilities provided to them. In particular, 85-88% of conscripts reported having adequate lighting, heating, bathing and toilet facilities, and sufficient space for residing. Fewer conscripts (83.85%) were pleased with the ventilation system. Last year, a greater proportion of conscripts were satisfied with the standard of their housing. For instance, adequate lighting and ventilation were reported by 93.45% of conscripts, sufficient heating by 91.07%, and sufficient residing space by 93.45%. The ratings for bathrooms and restrooms were both at the same level (87.58% this year and 88.69% in 2022). Comparing 2023 to 2022, there was a slight decrease in overall satisfaction with accommodation facilities.</p> <p>There was also a slight decline in the accommodation conditions in comparison with last year's survey results. This year, 93.79% of conscripts rated their accommodation as clean (93.79%), repaired (89.44%), adequately furnished - 85.71%, and separate from the toilet facilities (91.93%). In 2023, this percentage was 92-95%.</p>
Relationship with demographic data:	<p>The majority of respondents who rated the ventilation, lighting, furnishings, and maintenance of their accommodations as inadequate were from Batken Province. As they lived in tents, they assessed the condition of their housing and accommodations as poor. There was no other correlation between the demographic data of</p>

<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>conscripts and their responses regarding accommodation.</p> <p>Overall, conscripts were content with their accommodation and housing standards, except for 10-15% of them. Since the armed forces have been one of the top government priorities for the past decade, particularly during the administrations of Presidents Atambayev and Sadyr Japarov, more funds have been allocated to the improvement of infrastructure facilities in the military sector, including the housing of conscripts. Higher investments were evident in the improvement of housing conditions for conscripts, as supported by previous monitoring reports conducted by the National Centre in 2018 and the Ombudsman Office in 2017 as well. According to the report of the National Centre, conditions in the barracks were deemed to be decent.¹⁴ The 2017 report of the Ombudsman indicates that 78.5% of 531 conscripts had assessed their living conditions as good, 18.8% as satisfactory, and 2.6% as poor.¹⁵ In addition, the intensified border conflicts between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan between 2020 and 2023 compelled the ruling elite to reinforce the national armed forces by increasing financing for remuneration, equipment, infrastructure, facilities, housing, and food.</p> <p>The slight drop in housing standards this year is primarily attributable to the fact that conscripts of one of the military units in Batken Province, who participated in the survey in 2023, were living in tents. They gave their housing a low rating. The border conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the fall of 2022 led to the deployment of additional military personnel, including conscripts, to Batken province, which borders Tajikistan. The new barracks are now being constructed there, while the conscripts surveyed in July 2023 were living in tents temporarily. Except this case, conscripts highly rated their accommodation and housing standards.</p>
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❖ **Right to health protection**

Question	Average value	Percentage of responses by value									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did you feel like the military authorities took sufficient and adequate precautions to protect your health?		2,48	0,62	1,86	3,73	4,35	3,11	4,35	4,35	3,73	71,43
Were healthcare services available for you at all times in cases of injury or illness?		5,59	0,00	1,86	1,86	4,97	3,11	1,24	2,48	3,73	75,16
Were you satisfied with the healthcare service provided during your service?		6,83	0,00	0,62	1,86	6,21	2,48	5,59	5,59	4,97	65,84
Percentage of conscripts who indicated not applicable: % None											

Analysis:	
Key observations:	A significant percentage of soldiers (86,97%) (responses ranging from 6 to 10) stated that the military authorities took sufficient and adequate precautions to protect their health. In 2022, this rate was slightly higher at 92%. Fewer

¹⁴ The Observance of the Military Personnel's Rights in the Kyrgyz Republic: The Report of the National Center for Prevention of Torture, Bishkek, 2018, Available at: <http://npm.kg/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Soblyudenie-prav-voennosluzhashhih-v-uchrezhdeniyah-Vooruzhennyh-sil-KR-2018g.pdf>

¹⁵ A Special Report of the Ombudsman: The Observance of the Military Personnel's Rights in the Kyrgyz Republic: <https://ombudsman.kg/files/docs/reports/2016/observance-of-the-rights-of-recruits.pdf>

	<p>conscripts (83.24%) indicated that healthcare services were accessible, in cases of injury or illness. In addition, the majority of conscripts (84.47%) were pleased with the medical care they received while serving. Almost the same proportion of respondents (86.57%) held the same opinion last year.</p>
Relationship with demographic data:	<p>71% or 3/4 of soldiers from urban areas believed that the military authorities took adequate measures to protect their health. The majority of conscripts with Bachelor's and Master's degrees shared this view. They believed that the military authorities adequately protected their health while they were serving. There was no correlation with other demographic data such as age, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.</p>
Discussion:	<p>The national legislation, and specifically, the Law on the Status of Military Personnel, stipulates that all servicemen, including conscripts, are entitled to health care and all forms of medical aid in medical units and clinics free of charge.¹⁶ They are also all entitled to free medicines/drugs.¹⁷ If a military unit does not have a medical centre, any other healthcare facility, regardless of departmental affiliation, is required to provide free medical care as well as emergency medical support to the servicemen, including conscripts. The government has to reimburse these healthcare facilities for the costs paid in providing medical care to military personnel.¹⁸</p> <p>The survey results demonstrate that the right to health protection was guaranteed for the greater part of conscripts. In 2022, a greater part of conscripts shared the same opinion, indicating that this trend is persistent. The remaining 13-17% of respondents (with responses ranging from 1 to 5) rated both the availability and quality of health services as low. The 2018 monitoring report of the National Centre also revealed that medical centers in military units were only able to provide pre-hospital, primary care due to the lack of medical equipment.¹⁹ Moreover, there was also a scarcity of medical supplies and medication there. The National Center also figured out that the medical staff in some military units neglected to describe the causes of the injuries received by conscripts and to document these injuries in line with the Istanbul Protocol's standards. Another problem was that military units lacked specialized doctors such as dentists or surgeons. Additionally, the report stated the lack of ambulances/emergency vehicles to transport conscripts from military units to hospitals. It was a serious issue for military units located in remote areas. Moreover, many medical centers in military units required extensive restoration and refurbishing.</p> <p>As the medical facilities of the armed forces are separate from the system of the Health Ministry, enhancing the capacity of military medical staff is a serious problem.²⁰ There is no way for military medical staff to continuously and systematically improve their capacity. This resulted in the use of old clinical protocols (treatment approaches) by military medical personnel.²¹ These factors signal that changes are needed to improve the existing protocols, medical equipment and supplies provision to the military units, as well as the capacity of medical staff. The survey results demonstrate that the right to health protection was guaranteed for the greater part of conscripts</p>

¹⁶ Law on the Status of Military Personnel, available at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/817?cl=ru-ru>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The Observance of the Military Personnel's Rights in the Kyrgyz Republic: The Report of the National Center for Prevention of Torture, Bishkek, 2018, Available at: <http://npm.kg/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Soblyudenie-prav-voennoosuzhashhih-v-uchrezhdeniyah-Vooruzhennyh-sil-KR-2018g.pdf>

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid.

❖ **Right to work security**

Question	Average value	Percentage of responses by value									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Were you given regular and sufficient periods to rest?		1,86	3,73	3,73	4,35	9,32	2,48	1,86	2,48	1,24	68,94
Did you feel safe during your period of military service?		11,80	2,48	1,24	4,97	4,35	5,59	1,86	3,73	2,48	61,49
Analysis:											
Key observations:	<p>77% of respondents (values from 6 to 10) indicated that they were provided with sufficient and regular periods to rest. It indicates that the remaining 23% of conscripts believed they did not have enough time to recover. In 2022, a greater proportion of conscripts (89.89%) were content with their rest periods.</p> <p>24.85% of soldiers felt unsafe during their service, i.e. 75.15% reported feeling secure. In 2022, a higher percentage of conscripts reported experiencing a sense of security during their service, with a rate of 89.88%.</p>										
Relationship with demographic data:	<p>Most urban conscripts and those with Bachelor's and Master's degrees noted that they were given regular and sufficient periods to rest. Nearly all the members of ethnic minorities, with the exception of one conscript, mentioned they had enough time to rest.</p> <p>64% of urban conscripts admitted that they felt safe during their period of military service. Almost every member of a minority group who served reported feeling secure, with the exception of a single conscript. Similarly, 60% of conscripts with a Bachelor's degree felt safe, whereas 40% did not.</p>										
Discussion:	<p>When comparing the data from 2022 to that of 2023, it was seen that a greater number of conscripts in the latter year claimed insufficient time for rest. Representatives of MoD, Border Service, Internal Troops, and Ministry of Emergency, who were present during the presentation of the 2022 Conscripts Survey Results on August 19, 2023, in Bishkek, noted that the new cohorts of conscripts exhibit physical frailty and struggles to adapt to the demands of military discipline. Consequently, the conscripts seemingly expressed a need for increased periods of rest. They also noted that the education level of conscripts is declining year by year as the quality of the education system throughout the country has been declining. In this regard, the number of hours that military units devote to instruction on the political system has increased.</p> <p>In 2023, more conscripts reported feeling insecure while serving (24.85%), compared to the previous year when only 10.12% of soldiers held this view (10.12%). This difference may be attributed to the inclusion of new military units in the 2023 survey. Although the majority of soldiers (77%) felt secure while serving in 2023, it is noteworthy that a notable minority of conscripts (23%) expressed feelings of insecurity. This finding highlights the necessity for military authorities to take additional precautions.</p>										

❖ **Right to decent and sufficient nutrition**

Question	Average value	Percentage of responses by value										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not

												applicable
Was the amount of food provided in your location of placement sufficient for you?		1,86	1,24	3,11	3,11	4,35	0,00	1,86	2,48	3,11	78,88	None
Was the quality of food provided in your location of placement acceptable?		4,97	0,00	1,86	3,11	4,97	3,73	2,48	4,35	4,35	70,19	None
Did the military authorities take into account your individual dietary needs?		10,56	0,00	2,48	2,48	8,07	0,62	2,48	2,48	3,73	60,87	6,21
Was clean drinking water available to you at all times?		1,86	1,24	1,24	1,24	1,86	1,24	1,24	3,73	2,48	83,85	None

Analysis:	
Key observations:	<p>A larger part of conscripts (86,33%, values between 6 and 10) rated the amount of food served to them positively. In 2022, nearly the same percentage of conscripts (88.69%) had a positive assessment on this question. 85,10% of soldiers acknowledged that the quality of the food provided was acceptable, a level comparable to that of 2022 (90.47%). 67,7% of respondents, or 32.3%, complained that their individual dietary needs were not taken into consideration, while 6.21% of conscripts found this question non-applicable. In 2022, the same proportion of conscripts (27.97%) reported that their dietary requirements were not met.</p> <p>92.54% (responses from 6 to 10) reported having access to drinking water at all times. In the previous year, the proportion was higher, at 98.22%.</p>
Relationship with demographic data:	<p>62,5% of urban conscripts found the quality of food acceptable. All holders of Bachelor's and Master's degrees were pleased with the quality of the food served. Almost 80% of those who said that military authorities did not consider their dietary needs were from rural areas, and a smaller percentage were from urban areas. There were no further associations found.</p> <p>76% of urban residents did not report facing any problem with their dietary needs. A religious minority member found this question non-applicable. No other correlation was found for the rest of the demographic variables.</p>
Discussion:	<p>Similar to the previous year, the vast majority of soldiers were satisfied with the quantity and quality of food provided in military units. Over the past decade or so, the government has prioritized armed forces on its agenda, which explains this trend. Border conflicts in the past with Uzbekistan and more recently with Tajikistan, as well as unstable geopolitical situations in the region (such as in Afghanistan and Ukraine), prompted the political elite to strengthen the army and improve its infrastructure and facilities. As a result, the government started to invest more funding in the military. Additionally, the government attempts to make the army appealing to young people in order to recruit more individuals to serve in the military. As a consequence, the quality of housing and food</p>

continues to improve year after year. The trend was also highlighted by the monitoring reports of the National Centre and the Ombudsmen conducted in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Only 4% of conscripts, according to the Ombudsman report, were dissatisfied with the standard of the food served in military units, while 73.8% deemed it to be good and 22.2% found it satisfactory.²²

One of the recent government steps is that in April 2021, the cabinet increased the daily ration standards of military personnel, including conscripts by adding additional foodstuffs such as sausages, cheese, eggs, and fruits. Before this decision, the daily ration of conscripts was also nutritious with a total calorie intake of 5,325.65, which included:

No.	Items	Norm per day, grams
1	Bread made from top wheat flour (1 st grade)	400
2	Bread made from wheat flour (2 grade)	350
3	Wheat cereal (2nd-grade wheat)	ten
4	Different cereals	80
5	Rice	30
6	Pasta	90
7	Beef meat of the 1st category (horse meat, beef, lamb, yak)	200
8	Smoked sausage	50
9	Fish	120
10	Chicken egg (pcs. per week)	2
11	Cheese	15
12	Butter	30
13	Vegetable oil	50
14	Sugar	65
15	Potatoes	600
16	Cabbage	150
17	Beet	40
18	Onion	45
19	Carrot	40
20	Cucumbers, tomatoes, herbs	40
21	Tomato paste	6

²² A Special Report of the Ombudsman: The Observance of the Military Personnel's Rights in the Kyrgyz Republic: <https://ombudsman.kg/files/docs/reports/2016/observance-of-the-rights-of-the-military-personnel.pdf>

22	Salt (iodized)	30
23	Tea	1.2
24	Bay leaf	0.2
25	Pepper	0.3
26	Vinegar	2
27	Dried fruits	30
28	Condensed milk	30
29	Juices (fresh fruits)	100
Total calories, in kcal		5325.65

Meantime, one-third of soldiers (32.3%) reported that their specific dietary requirements were not met. Prior to enlistment, however, all conscripts must undergo two medical examinations: the first in their home district and the second in Bishkek. If they have allergies or some other dietary problems, they are not subject to conscription. Hence, during military service, dietary considerations are not taken into consideration when meals are prepared for all conscripts in the military units, but not as per the individual dietary habits.

In 2023, fewer conscripts had access to potable water, as compared to the previous year. This decline is explained by the case of one military unit in Batken province where conscripts resided in tents temporarily. Other military units had drinking water without any problem.

Final Analysis:	
<p>Key observations: <i>(Describe key observations and trends from the results of the entire survey, e.g., which rights did conscripts report to be violated the most)</i></p>	<p>As in 2022, the majority of conscripts had their civil and political rights safeguarded. Specifically, the majority of soldiers (86.59%) reported that violence (torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment) was either non-existent or minimal. In relation to the freedom of association and assembly, it is noteworthy that 69.57% of conscripts expressed the view that their freedom of assembly and association was not restricted. Furthermore, with the exception of one instance, the conscripts were not subjected to forced labor. The survey findings also show that the dominant part of soldiers was not the target of discrimination based on their ethnicity, religion, economic status, language, or urban/rural origins. Only 9.94% of conscripts viewed the status in the military hierarchy and level of education as the causes of discriminatory attitudes. Regarding the right to respect for private and family life, 72.05% of soldiers reported maintaining regular in-person contact with their families, while 65.22% of respondents enjoyed regular virtual communication.</p> <p>Compared to 2022, a greater proportion of conscripts showed reluctance in filing a complaint in cases of torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment. In 2023, 42.86% of soldiers would not file a complaint, whereas in 2022, this figure was only 25%. It indicates that the level of skepticism in the investigation process was greater among conscripts surveyed in 2023. This is due to soldiers' low confidence that an investigation will be launched (41.65% in 2023 vs. 30.36% in 2022), that it will be prompt (40.37% vs. 36.31% in 2022) and impartial (39.13% vs. 36.31% in 2022), and that investigating authority will be competent (44.72% vs. 35.71% in 2022). In addition, roughly half of the conscripts (47.83% vs 24.41% in 2022) harbor doubts that they will be safeguarded from potential adverse repercussions stemming from filing a complaint. Another significant factor preventing conscripts</p>

	<p>from filing a complaint is that 40.99% of them (vs.36.36% in 2022) do not believe that an officer or serviceman found guilty of misconduct would be punished.</p> <p>Comparing the survey results for 2022 and 2022, it is apparent that 2022 responses were somewhat more optimistic. For instance, in 2022, 95–98% of conscripts claimed there was no discrimination based on their social backgrounds, whereas in 2023, this percentage fell to 91–93%. In 2022, 79.74% of conscripts reported maintaining regular physical contact with their relatives, whereas in 2023, only 72.0% of conscripts admitted it. In 2023, 34.78% of soldiers claimed that the rules prohibiting them from communicating with their families were unjustifiably restrictive, whereas in 2022, only 22.05% of conscripts acknowledged this restriction.</p> <p>The positive indicator for the year 2023 was that fewer conscripts (26.70%) believed that their freedom of expression was overly restricted. In 2022, a higher number of conscripts (33.93%) stated about it. The socioeconomic rights of conscripts were also protected to a larger extent. For instance, the vast majority of conscripts had access to adequate housing (83-87%) as well as nutrition (85-86%). The assessment of these two services in 2023 was slightly lower than it was in 2022. The decline in housing is predominantly attributable to the fact that members of one of the military units in Batken Province lived in tents.</p> <p>The majority of conscripts (84.47%) had also access to medical services like in 2022 (86.57%). The right to rest was also guaranteed for the majority of conscripts, as 77% of them reported having sufficient and regular rest periods. However, this rate was higher a year ago (89.89%). Similarly, fewer conscripts (75.15%) reported feeling secure in military service, whereas this percentage was previously greater at 89.88%.</p> <p>Overall, political, civil, social, and economic rights were upheld for the vast majority of soldiers. The rights to medical care, food, and accommodation were ranked highest, along with the right to be free from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, forced labor, and discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, language, or rural/urban origins. The right to file a complaint received the lowest rating.</p>
<p>Relationship with demographic data: (Describe key relationships identified based on all responses – i.e., what are key demographic data which affect the way conscripts perceive their rights)</p>	<p>The predominant number of conscripts were ethnic Kyrgyz and Muslims and the Kyrgyz language was their mother tongue. Similar to 2022, the ethnic, religious, and language minorities were underrepresented among conscripts. Consequently, religion, ethnicity, and spoken language did not play a role in how conscripts perceived their rights. The responses of conscripts were affected by their age, level of education, and origin (urban or rural). For instance, age was viewed as the most significant factor contributing to victimization, as younger soldiers (18-19 years old) were subjected to maltreatment more often.</p> <p>There was also a correlation between the urban/rural origins of conscripts and their rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly. In particular, more than half of urban conscripts reported that their freedom of expression, association, and assembly was restricted. The dominant majority of rural conscripts indicated that their freedom of expression was not limited beyond reasonable. The overwhelming majority of those who claimed the military did not consider their dietary requirements were from rural areas.</p> <p>There was also a correlation between the level of education of soldiers and their responses. Specifically, the majority of Bachelor's and Master's degree holders reported that their freedom of expression, assembly, and association was restricted beyond what they deemed reasonable during military service. The vast majority of</p>

	<p>respondents who said "yes" to the question of whether authorities unjustifiably restricted conscripts' contact with their families during their service had secondary education.</p> <p>Finally, none of the ethnic and religious minorities reported being discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity and religion.</p>
<p>Discussion: <i>Please explain how the key results of the survey can be understood with respect to the national context)</i></p>	<p>Although there were some drops in the ratings of a number of political and socio-economic rights in 2023, the trends remain unchanged with political, civil, social, and economic rights upheld for the vast majority of soldiers. The rights to medical care, food, and accommodation were ranked highest, along with the right to be free from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, forced labor, and discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, language, or rural/urban origins. The right to file a complaint received the lowest rating.</p> <p>The vast majority of conscripts did not experience torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment in 2023. Yet, one-third of conscripts (27.23%) do not know how to report and file a complaint in cases of mistreatment by other servicemen. This is a decrease from the 2022 survey when 23% of conscripts were informed of complaint submission mechanisms. In any case, these statistics indicate that every seventh soldier in the Kyrgyz army is unaware of his rights with regard to the complaint procedures. In addition, it is more difficult for conscripts to file complaints with independent human rights institutions such as the Ombudsman Office or the National Center for the Prevention of Torture. The issue is that conscripts are prohibited from using their mobile phones during their 12-month military service to be able to report by phone or online via the Internet.</p> <p>Low levels of conscripts' confidence in the investigation process continued to be a problem. It was also regarded as an issue last year. Specifically, in 2023, nearly half of the conscripts (42.86%) indicated that they would be reluctant to file a complaint in cases of mistreatment, and the percentage of skepticism was found to be higher in 2023. This suggests that investigating authorities are not always transparent, instances of impartial investigations are either rare or not widely publicized. Another obstacle is that under current national law, conscripts and military officers can only file complaints with their direct superiors. This often discourages them from submitting complaints so as not to harm their relationships with their superiors. In addition, it appears that the restrictive military environment and traditional military culture do not prompt conscripts to complain.</p> <p>According to the 2023 survey, quite a large number of conscripts and their servicemen (8.07%) thought about committing suicide. The high rate of suicide among conscripts, which is not decreasing, shows the existence of violence among conscripts in Kyrgyzstan. In 2022, this rate was only 1.79%. This is a worrisome trend and suicides continue to be a problem for the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan. According to the Prosecutor's Office, 10 soldiers committed suicide in 2020 and 2021. In 2014, there were 6 suicides, in 2015 – 6 such cases, 2016 – 2, 2017 - 2, and in 2018, there were no such cases. It means that suicides are a serious issue for the Armed Forces.</p> <p>Despite the fact that the Ministry of Defense (MoD) instituted the position of psychologist for all military units in 2015, 42.86% of conscripts reported not expecting to receive psychological support to cope with the experience of torture or inhuman treatment or punishment. Not all military units have a psychologist due to the scarcity of psychologists in the local market. Besides, military psychologists are not trained in national education institutions. At the same time, many military psychologists require capacity-building and retraining. Overall, the psychological support system within the military sector of Kyrgyzstan needs improvement.</p>

	<p>The dominant part of soldiers believed that their freedom of expression was not restricted. The servicemembers' right to freedom of expression and information is not the same as their civilian counterparts. It is strictly regulated in the armed forces in Kyrgyzstan. Pursuant to the Law on Status of Military Servicemen, military personnel enjoy citizens' rights and freedoms but with restrictions due to the requirements of military service. Article 6 of this Law stipulates that military servicemen are guaranteed freedom of speech and press, freedom of opinion and expression, but only under the condition of maintaining the state and military secrets, as well as the confidentiality of correspondence and telephone conversations. It means the freedom of expression of conscripts in Kyrgyzstan is categorized as a limited right.</p> <p>The national legislation (Law on Status of Military Servicemen) bans all military personnel, including conscripts from being a member of a political party or political association pursuing political goals. It is also prohibited for them to speak in favor of a political party. This tradition of the political neutrality of military personnel has its origins in the Soviet Union when the Communist Party dominated the military sector. The Communist Party simply did not want the military officers to exert control over the party, so it made the military sector subordinate to the party. In addition, military personnel, including conscripts, are prohibited from participating in election campaigns by running for office or attending rallies. Additionally, they cannot express their support for a particular candidate. Conscripts participate in national and municipal elections and referendums as voters. The Law on the Status of Military Servicemen bans servicemen from taking part in strikes, demonstrations, or protests.</p> <p>With the exception of this case, conscripts were free from forced labor. Socio-demographic characteristics of soldiers were not the basis for discrimination.</p> <p>As far as economic rights are concerned, conscripts were content with their accommodation, housing standards, as well as medical health services. Since the armed forces have been one of the top government priorities for the past decade, particularly during the administrations of Presidents Atambayev and Sadyr Japarov, more funds have been allocated to the improvement of infrastructure facilities in the military sector, including the housing of conscripts. Higher investments were evident in the improvement of housing conditions for conscripts.</p> <p>As the medical facilities of the armed forces are separate from the system of the Health Ministry, enhancing the capacity of military medical staff is a serious problem. There is no way for military medical staff to continuously and systematically improve their capacity. This resulted in the use of old clinical protocols (treatment approaches) by military medical personnel. These factors signal that changes are needed to improve the existing protocols, medical equipment, and supplies provision to the military units, as well as the capacity of medical staff.</p>
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