Media Report Deportation of Russian Deserter from Lithuania, While Authorities Say He Left Voluntarily

English translation of an article published by LRT.lt on 17 June 2026. Original author: Monika Juškevičiūtė. Source: https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/2963216/smi-govoriat-o-deportatsii-rossiianina-dezertira-iz-litvy-vedomstva-o-dobrovol-nom-otezde

The Telegram channel and human rights media outlet focused on Russia, Slovo Zashchite (A Word for the Defence), reported that a young Russian serviceman who had previously applied for asylum in Lithuania was deported to Russia. The Lithuanian State Border Guard Service says that the man himself withdrew his asylum application and agreed to return to his home country. At the same time, the Lithuanian agency says it can neither confirm nor deny whether the man was a serviceman in the Russian army.

According to Slovo Zashchite, the man fled directly from the war in Ukraine. Some time ago, he arrived at Lithuania's border with Russia without an international passport and applied for asylum. However, on Monday, 15 June, he was forcibly deported.

State Border Guard Service: He Crossed the Border Illegally

Lithuania's State Border Guard Service (VSAT) confirmed that the Russian citizen had been returned, but presented a different chronology of events. According to service representative Giedrius Mišutis, the man was detained on 29 December after illegally crossing the border from Russia.

The court later found him guilty of illegally crossing the state border and sentenced him to four months and twenty days of imprisonment.

According to Mišutis, the Russian citizen did not apply for asylum immediately after his detention, but only several months later, while already serving his sentence.

> "Four months passed from the time of his detention at the end of December until he submitted his asylum application, the VSAT representative noted."

On 19 May, the man was released from prison. The time he had spent in pre-trial detention was counted toward his sentence, so in practice he spent about a month in prison.

After his release, he was handed over to border guards and placed in the Foreigners Registration Centre. Two days later, by court decision, he was again placed in custody until the second half of August, while the Migration Department continued examining his application.

In early June, the man voluntarily withdrew his asylum application and stated that he wished to return home.

> "On 1 June, he voluntarily submitted a statement requesting that the examination of his asylum application be discontinued and expressed his wish to return home, Mišutis said."

After that, the Migration Department took his statement into account and, on 8 June, discontinued the examination of his asylum application, while also issuing a decision on his return to Russia - the country from which he had arrived and of which he is a citizen.

According to the VSAT representative, the decision to send the man to Russia was based on his own expressed wish.

The day after the decision was made, border guards familiarised the Russian citizen with the documents. According to Mišutis, the man did not express any wish to appeal the decision.

> "He did not express any wish to appeal the decision, agreed with everything, was satisfied with the arrangements, and agreed to return to Russia, the service representative said."

After the necessary formalities had been completed, on 15 June he was escorted to the Kybartai border checkpoint on the border with Russia and handed over to the Russian side.

On Desertion from the Russian Army: We Can Neither Confirm nor Deny

The VSAT representative notes that the man was detained by officers of the service because he had illegally crossed the border. Under such circumstances, information about the person's background is not taken into account, and therefore the service cannot confirm that the man was a Russian serviceman who had deserted from the front.

> "We can neither confirm nor deny this information. It is possible that such data may be contained in the court case file, Mišutis said."

> "For VSAT officers, he was a person who had illegally crossed the state border, and a pre-trial investigation was therefore launched, he added."

Mišutis emphasised that, in such cases - when a decision is made to open an investigation - neither the person's profession, education, nor other personal information is relevant to VSAT officers.

> "He was convicted for illegally crossing the border, and he applied for asylum as a Russian citizen, he explained."

Refusal of Asylum Is Not Uncommon

The Migration Department, for its part, does not comment on whether the man in question was a deserter, citing personal data protection.

However, in a written response to LRT.lt, the department stated that cases in which foreigners themselves withdraw their asylum applications are not uncommon. Last year, the department received five requests from Russian citizens to discontinue the examination of their asylum cases; this year, it has received two more.

According to the department, in 2025 Russian citizens submitted 34 asylum applications in Lithuania. Refugee status was granted to 24 Russians, while one person received subsidiary protection. At the same time, 39 decisions were made to refuse asylum.

In 2026, five applications from Russian citizens have been received so far. Refugee status has been granted to two applicants, while in seven cases decisions were made to refuse asylum.

The Migration Department emphasises that the number of applications submitted and the number of decisions made do not coincide, since an application may be submitted in one calendar year and the decision on it may be made the following year.

According to Slovo Zashchite, after returning from Lithuania to Russia, the young man was detained. His further fate is reportedly unknown. It is not possible to independently confirm or refute this information.