# Russian Soldiers' Wives Manual Warns of Psychological Impacts from Ukraine Deployment



A training manual issued to the wives of Russian soldiers underscores the severe psychological impacts that soldiers returning from the frontlines in Ukraine may suffer. Compiled by the All-Russian People's Front, a pro-government body established by President Vladimir Putin in 2011, the manual details significant behavioral changes in returning soldiers, such as increased aggression and sexual violence. The guidance advises women to avoid startling their husbands, encourages patience, and emphasizes the importance of psychological support.

High-profile violent incidents attributed to returning soldiers have heightened concerns. These include the case of Sergei Shakhmatov, who was sentenced to 17 years for raping two young girls upon his return, and Tsyren-Dorzhi Tsyrenzhapov, previously convicted of murder, who killed again after coming back from Ukraine. Other incidents of violence, including murders, rapes, and assaults, have been linked to returning fighters and pardoned convicts like Artem Bukotin and Ivan Rossomakhin.

Human rights campaigners, including Alena Popova, have criticized the manual, accusing it of forcing women to tolerate abuse under the guise of supporting traumatized soldiers. The Russian government has been criticized for its handling of the psychological repercussions among soldiers and the resultant domestic violence. Separately, President Putin has called these fighters the "new elite," even as reports of sexual violence and aggressive behavior among returnees have surfaced.

The manual advises that soldiers may need professional help for conditions like PTSD and recommends that wives should facilitate this support, emphasizing that PTSD is a normal response to war trauma and not a sign of weakness.