

Ex-Officer Says Troops Fed Dog Food to Save Money

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Interior Ministry troops were fed dog food earlier this year to save money, a former officer in the ministry said Thursday.

A rare whistleblower in the country's expansive security forces, ex-Major Igor Matveyev said officers tried to cover up the scandal and other alleged wrongdoing at the Interior Ministry troops base where he served in the far eastern city of Vladivostok.

Matveyev, a Chechen war veteran, said he was ordered dismissed after posting a video on the Internet this month alleging widespread corruption in the Interior Ministry forces.

He said he would contest a dismissal order issued by a superior after he posted the nearly 10-minute video, in which he asked President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to intervene.

"It took me a month to determine through various reports exactly what was happening," he said by phone from Vladivostok, some 6,400 kilometers east of Moscow.

"It's embarrassing to say, but soldiers here were fed dog food. It was fed to them as stew," Matveyev said, adding that dog food labels were covered up with labels reading "premium quality beef."

He added that 18 illegal migrant workers were housed at the Vladivostok base for a month and a half and were used for cleanup and construction jobs.

"They were Koreans or Chinese, I don't know because they did not have any documents," he said.

He also said property on the base had been sold off without permission to make money for the officers, but did not specify what had been sold or to whom.

No one at the ministry's troop unit was immediately available to comment on his allegations. The Interior Ministry troops command was cited by news agencies as saying that a number of the incidents Matveyev described had occurred, but that they had long ago been dealt with and that an investigation had been started.

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