

Human Rights Court Awards Damages to Mother of Dead Soldier

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The European Court of Human Rights has for the first time ruled against Russia in the wrongful death of a soldier. Above, a Russian soldier on a bus in Tver region. **Dmitry Abramov**

The European Court of Human Rights has ordered Russia to pay 45,000 euros in compensation to the mother of a Russian conscript who died after being shot by a fellow soldier.

The case is the first in which the Russian government has been found culpable in the death of a soldier, according to a statement by The Mother's Right Foundation, which works to defend the rights of families whose children die in the armed forces.

Valery Putintsev, a native of Khanty-Mansiisk in central Russia, died in 2002 after being shot by a fellow conscript while attempting to flee military detainment, the statement said. The Mother's Right Foundation filed a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Putintsev's mother Svetlana, claiming that Putintsev's right to life was infringed upon.

Putintsev had psychological problems, did not fit in with the other soldiers, and was beaten on multiple occasions, Krasnodar Soldiers' Mothers Committee head Nina Rechkalova told Interfax. As a result of the beatings, Putintsev fled his base and was caught, then sentenced to 15 days military detainment.

He then tried to flee from detainment and was shot by a guard. Guards at military detainment centers are authorized by law to fire upon prisoners attempting to flee.

The human rights court found that by allowing Putintsev to be fired upon, Russia was not upholding its obligations to protect his right to life. The court also found that the military knew that Putintsev had psychological problems and could have predicted that he would attempt to flee the base a second time.

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