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Canadian Shot Dead in Dagestan Anti-Terror Operation

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Plotnikov

A former boxer with Canadian citizenship is among seven suspected militants killed over the weekend in a special anti-terrorism operation in Dagestan, police said.

Police and the Federal Security Service forces organized a joint ambush of suspected insurgents late Friday night on the outskirts of the village of Utamysh. Seven suspects were shot dead in the crossfire, police said in a statement Saturday.

In an ensuing firefight, one police officer was killed and another injured, the statement said, adding that a special anti-terrorism regime had been introduced in Dagestan's Kayakentsky district, where the operation took place.

Among those killed was William Plotnikov, a former boxer with a Canadian passport who went by the nickname "the Canadian," RIA-Novosti reported Sunday, citing local police.

Plotnikov, 23, was registered as living in the Tyumen region, and he received Canadian citizenship in 2008, Interfax said.

His profile page in the Odnoklassniki social network says he finished school in 2005 in the oil-rich town of Megion in western Siberia, located 760 kilometers northeast of the city of Tyumen. Later, in 2009 and 2010, he studied at Seneca College in Toronto.

Plotnikov was once a boxing student at Toronto-based European Boxing School, founded by Boris Gitman, a prominent coach who emigrated from the Soviet Union, Interfax said. It wasn't immediately clear on Sunday how he had gotten involved in the rebel movement.

Canadian Embassy officials were not immediately available for comment Sunday.

Russian authorities have played up the occasional discovery of a dead foreigner among the insurgents, stressing that they are fighting international terrorism in the North Caucasus.

Dagestani police said Plotnikov had been listed in their database since 2010, when his fingerprints were taken in the local city of Khasavyurt for an unspecified reason.

The FSB's National Anti-Terror Committee identified two other insurgents killed in the operation as the heads of local criminal groups who had eluded federal authorities since 2010.

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