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39 Conscripted Troops Desert Post in Kyrgyzstan

By The Moscow Times

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BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan — Police in Kyrgyzstan say 39 military conscripts abandoned their post earlier this week, reportedly over a disagreement with commanding officers.

The soldiers walked out Sunday. On Monday evening, 20 of the soldiers returned to their post.

Local media outlets said the troops, who were due to demobilize in the spring, were guards at the Ala-Archa governmental residence in the capital, Bishkek.

The Bishkek-based online news portal 24.kg reported that military sources had said the desertion followed an argument between the conscripts and their superiors.

Police official Gennady Krasnyansky told the news portal that the 20 soldiers who returned would face only disciplinary action, not criminal charges.

Budgetary shortfalls and poor morale have undermined the army in the Central Asian country.

Kyrgyzstan hosts a U.S. air transit center used for operations in Afghanistan and has voiced apprehensions about the possible security ramifications over NATO's withdrawal from there in 2014.

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