

Report: Russian Troops Were Paid \$7,000 to Fight in Eastern Ukraine

August 27, 2014



Russian troops serving in Dagestan may have been paid 250,000 rubles (\$7,000) each to participate in military operations in eastern Ukraine, a member of the Kremlin's human rights council said in an interview with Dozhd on Wednesday.

Council member Ella Polyakova said in the same interview that about 100 injured Russian soldiers had been flown to a St. Petersburg hospital from an unspecified location.

The comments came amid widespread speculation about the deaths of several Russian paratroopers from Pskov who some suspect may have died in a secret operation in Ukraine.

Reports of Russian soldiers in Dagestan being recruited to go to eastern Ukraine originated from Lyudmila Bogatenkova, chairwoman of the Soldier's Mothers Committee in Stavropol, Polyakova said Wednesday.

"I don't have documentary evidence for now, just the witness Lyudmila Vasilyevna Bogatenkova," Polyakova told Dozhd.

The sum of 250,000 rubles was likely a one-time payment, not a monthly salary, Polyakova said, noting that high unemployment in Dagestan may have been a factor in motivating troops to sign such contracts.

"Not a single one of them can prove that he in fact took part in any military actions. Russia is not waging war. There are no [state] military actions," Polyakova said.

Russia's Defense Ministry has repeatedly denied having sent any troops to Ukraine.

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