

Two Soldiers Dead in Crimea As Russia Alleges 'Terrorist' Activity

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A Russian serviceman has been killed in Crimea while foiling an alleged operation by the Ukrainian military, Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) announced Wednesday.

One soldier was shot dead in the Crimean city of Armyansk on Aug. 6 during a raid on an alleged Ukrainian spy ring, Russian officials have claimed. Russian forces announced that they had seized a large quantity of explosives, weapons and military supplies and accused Ukraine of preparing a "terrorist attack" on the peninsula.

A second Russian soldier was shot and killed on the night of Aug. 7 after Ukrainian troops and armored vehicles fired from over the border, the FSB claimed.

Ukraine has completely denied the accusations, calling them "a provocation."

A criminal investigation has been opened and extra security is in place in large cities, at major infrastructure facilities, and at tourist sites, the FSB said. Security has also been increased

along the border with Ukraine, the agency said.

The Crimean peninsula was annexed by Russia in Feb. 2014, with a disputed referendum taking place in March to pave the way for the region's incorporation into Russia. Ukraine and the international community at large have refused to recognize the territory as Russian. Ongoing military conflict in eastern Ukraine between government forces and Russian-backed separatists has since cost almost 10,000 lives, with violence recently flaring in the region after ceasefire agreements failed to hold.

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