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Court Upholds Life Sentence for Russian Soldier Who Murdered Armenian Family

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An Armenian appeals court on Monday upheld a life sentence handed down to Valery Permyakov, a Russian soldier convicted of killing an Armenian family of seven in 2015.

The victims' relatives had petitioned against the sentence, claiming that Permyakov did not act alone and that the case had not been resolved. In another motion they demanded 450,000 euro as compensation.

Permyakov was stationed at a Russian military base near the Armenian city of Gyumri when on Jan. 12, 2015 seven members of the local Avetisyan family, including two children, were found dead in their home. Permyakov's uniform and weapon were found at the scene.

Permyakov was attempting to cross the border to Turkey when he was apprehended 16 km outside Gyumri by Russian border guards. He was taken into custody at the base where he had been stationed.

Initially the investigation and prosecution was to be carried out under the jurisdiction of Russian authorities. However, after spontaneous demonstrations in Gyumri and the capital Yerevan Russian and Armenian authorities agreed to cooperate on the case.

On Aug. 12, the Military Garrison Court of Russia sentenced Peryakov to ten years imprisonment for desertion, theft and illegal possession of a weapon.

The Armenian court sentenced him to life imprisonment for seven counts of murder on Aug. 23.

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