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Russian Airborne Commander Killed in Syria

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Defense Ministry

Major Sanal Sachirov, commander of a Russian airborne battalion, has been killed in Syria, the news site Meduza reported Monday.

Sachirov's funeral was held on Dec. 13 in the southern Russian village of Yashkul.

News of the death of a Russian officer in Syria first appeared on social networks on Dec. 12, but could not be confirmed. Russia's Defense Ministry has declined to comment on the matter.

Major Sachirov served in the 56th Separate Airborne Brigade stationed in the town of Kamyshin in the Volgograd region. The circumstances surrounding the officer's death are unknown.

Since the beginning of the Russian military operation in Syria on Sep. 30, 2015, at least 23 servicemen have been confirmed dead.

On Dec. 16, Meduza confirmed the death of another Russian serviceman Eduard Sokurov. He was awarded a medal "for courage" posthumously. Sokurov was reportedly killed in Syria Oct. 1, 2015.

Last week, Speaker of Russia's Federation Council Valentina Matviyenko claimed that Russia has no interest in sending ground troops to fight in Syria.

However, Russian state TV aired a news story Sunday which acknowledged the deployment of Russian special forces to Syria where units reportedly participated in fighting near Aleppo.

Read More about Chechen Special Forces Deployed to Syria**.**

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