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Russian Military Blasts 'Betrayal' After Media Leaks Deceased Pilot's Salary

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Flowers in memory of Sukhoi Su-25 jet aircraft pilot Roman Filipov outside the Russian Defense Ministry
Artyom Geodakyan / TASS

Russia's military has threatened a St. Petersburg-based independent news website with legal action after it disclosed the salary of a Russian fighter pilot who was downed in Syria last week.

Major Roman Filipov set off a hand grenade to avoid capture by militants when his fighter jet was downed in the northern province of Idlib, the Russian Defense Ministry confirmed Saturday.

Related article: Downed Russian Pilot Set Off Grenade to Avoid Capture By Syrian Militants

On Monday, The Fontanka.ru news website reported that Filipov had received a monthly average salary of 100,000 rubles ($1,700), after finding the information on the ministry's website by using the deceased soldier's name, date of birth and ID number.

The news website exposed the security breach in an article titled "The Defense Ministry Has Disclosed the Salaries of Servicemen to Possible Enemies."

"A possible enemy who has access to the internet goes to the known address, enters the specified data and gains access to the financial history of the serviceman," the St. Petersburg-based website wrote.

Russia's Defense Ministry accused the website of violating "simple concepts of decency and journalistic ethics" after the publication.

"We are confident that law enforcement agencies will give their assessment of what took place in line with Russian law," it said in an online statement Monday.

Explaining that Major Filipov was unable to access his page and come up with a unique password before his death, the ministry chastized the article's author as "not worth the shadow of our officer."

"Russian servicemen who fight terrorism protect these citizens, who are ready to betray anyone for 30 pieces of silver," it said.

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