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Siberian 'Mobster' Killed After Attacking Soldiers at Train Station

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Yuri Smityuk / TASS

A man described as a local Siberian "criminal kingpin" has been killed in a shootout with troops guarding a train following an altercation at a local station.

Military investigators said the guards opened fire at a group of 10 men armed with rocks who ignored warning shots and attempted to storm the train on a stopover in Zabaikalsky region. The killed man had a criminal record and was drunk when he was shot dead early Monday, the Russian Investigative Committee's military branch said.

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Local media said a conflict with troops en route to the Vostok-2018 military drills broke out at a Petrovsk-Zabaikalsk train station cafe where the victim was celebrating his 29th birthday.

“After an argument, two soldiers were stabbed [at the cafe], and they ran back... The locals chased them and were met by a sentry,” the Chita.ru news website quoted the head of the city, Alexander Taranov, as saying.

“One shot in the air, but they apparently weren’t convinced and kept rushing toward the train carriage,” he added.

“The sentry fired: one dead body, one wounded.”

The city’s emergency dispatch center told Interfax-Siberia that the victim, nicknamed “Zhdanchik,” was a high-profile figure in the local criminal underworld. The state-run RIA Novosti news agency identified him as Anton Zhdanov.

Witnesses told the outlet that Zhdanov had gotten into a tussle with the soldiers, who had reportedly tried to strike up a conversation with women at the station.

“Anton felt like he ran the city,” a Petrovsk-Zabaikalsk resident named Andrei was quoted as saying. “He got away with a lot of things.”

Some 4,000 miles from Moscow, Zabaikalsky region has been described as “ground zero” of the underground criminal culture that goes by the slogan AUE, which stands for "Arestantsky. Uklad. Edin," or "Prison. Order. Universal."

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