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3 Kazakh Security Officials Found Dead in Wake of Unrest

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Riot police officers during a rally over rising energy prices in Almaty, Kazakhstan. **EPA / STR / TASS**

At least three security officials have been found dead across Kazakhstan as authorities scramble to account for losses during some of the worst unrest in the ex-Soviet republic's three decades of independence, media reported Monday.

Kazakhstan's interior ministry says 16 police, national guard and military personnel were killed and more than 1,300 injured during the week of regional protests over fuel price hikes that descended into nationwide riots. Kazakhstan's national security committee (KNB) last week announced the arrest of its former head Karim Masimov and "other persons" on suspicion of treason.

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Interfax reported Monday that the head of police in southern Kazakhstan's Zhambyl region, Zhanat Suleimenov, died by suicide.

Local journalists reported that authorities had allegedly opened an unspecified criminal case against Suleimenov following the capture of local police and government buildings in Zhambyl's administrative center of Taras.

Soon after, the KNB announced that the body of its colonel Azamat Ibrayev was found outside his home in the Kazakh capital of Nur-Sultan.

Baza, a Telegram channel believed to have links to Russia's security services, claimed that Ibrayev fell from a high-rise building.

Interfax later cited Kazakhstan's interior ministry as confirming that the head of a police district in Kazakhstan's largest city of Almaty, Tanat Nazanov, died from a heart attack.

The three deaths come nearly a week after social media footage showed crowds storming public offices, setting fire to buildings and seizing police equipment, including vehicles and riot gear.

Various accounts place the number of total casualties of the unrest across dozens of Kazakh cities at between 44 and 164.

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