

Senior VK Executive Dies in Arctic Accident

June 07, 2022



VK's first deputy CEO Vladimir Gabrielyan. **Igor Ivanko / Kommersant**

A senior executive at Russian internet giant VK has died in an accident in the Arctic, the company [confirmed](#) Tuesday following reports that he went missing during a dangerous river crossing.

First deputy CEO Vladimir Gabrielyan was said to have gone missing with his colleague, VK's director of procurement Sergei Merzlyakov, in northern Russia's remote Nenets autonomous district on Monday evening.

Local emergency services [said](#) two off-road vehicles had capsized while crossing a river near the coast of the White Sea.

Gabrielyan's wife Alyona and a fourth member of their group, identified as Sergei Olsevich, managed to make it out alive.

"We've learned this morning that Vladimir Gabrielyan and Sergei Merzlyakov died as a result

of a tragic accident,” VK [said](#) in a statement shared with media outlets.

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Baza, a Telegram channel with purported links in Russia’s security services, [reported](#) that Gabrielyan had radioed from the first vehicle that “the river was dangerous, but it was okay to move forward.”

Olsevich and Alyona Gabrielyan reportedly jumped out of the second vehicle after it tipped over and tried unsuccessfully to establish radio contact with Gabrielyan and Merzlyakov for five hours.

“Olsevich and [Alyona] decided to go back on foot and, after walking 25 kilometers, arrived at the [nearest] village,” Baza reported.

It later [said](#) Gabrielyan and Merzlyakov’s bodies were found on the bank of Pestsovaya River on Tuesday morning.

Gabrielyan joined VK’s board of directors on March 31.

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