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Mothers of Russian Soldiers Killed in Ukraine Blame Pro-Kremlin Reporters

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Russian military in the Donetsk region of Ukraine. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

The mothers of Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine last week have accused pro-Kremlin war correspondents of causing their deaths by revealing their positions, a BBC Russian service journalist said Thursday.

The mothers said Ukrainian artillery shelling killed at least five soldiers and heavily wounded three others after the Izvestia daily published a field report on Russian tanks firing at Ukrainian positions on June 30.

"This happened as a result of [war correspondents] declassifying the location of military equipment and personnel in the video," the mothers wrote in a letter shared by BBC Russian journalist Ilya Barabanov.

Neither the letter nor Izvestia's report named the location of the alleged Ukrainian attacks.

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The mothers' letter addresses the head of the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers branch in southern Russia's Astrakhan region, where the unit that came under attack is based.

It calls on the NGO to petition Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shogu to ban the work of war correspondents embedded with Russian and pro-Moscow separatist units on the battlefield.

"We demand immediate measures to prohibit the activities of war correspondents in areas of active combat operations," the mothers wrote.

Russia's Defense Ministry has not commented on the letter.

The ministry last updated its official death toll in Ukraine in late March, with 1,351 confirmed fatalities.

The independent iStories investigative outlet said it verified 4,267 deaths of Russian soldiers since Moscow invaded Ukraine in late February.

Ukrainian and Western intelligence have estimated that Russia's military death toll is significantly higher.

Ukrainian senior presidential aide Mykhaylo Podolyak said this week that up to 115,000 Russian soldiers have been killed or wounded in the four-month campaign.

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