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Russian-Israeli Families Mourn Victims Of Hamas Attack

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Dmitry Reshetnikov's funeral. **Volgograd Jewish Community / VK**

Dmitry Reshetnikov moved from the Russian city of Volgograd to Israel to study when he was a teenager.

Serving as a second lieutenant in a prestigious Israeli infantry unit, which he specifically worked to get into, he was killed during this month's shocking attack by Hamas militants.

Upon learning of her son's death, his mother Natalia Reshetnikova had to travel from Russia to attend the funeral.

"Son, my dear... You always said that a real man must go through the army. You've become a man. You grew up in the army and became a real man. I'm proud of you," Reshetnikova said, crying, to a crowd at the funeral ceremony at Israel's national cemetery in Jerusalem last week.

Despite Reshetnikov, 20, having no relatives in Israel, hundreds of people who had no prior

acquaintance with him attended the ceremony to honor his memory and to support his mother, said Judith Yoffe, who studied with Reshetnikov in a Jewish school in Volgograd and also attended his funeral.

According to Yael Yoffe, the chairman of the board of the Volgograd Jewish Community Center, Reshetnikov's army service was set to end in March 2024.

"This is all very painful, he had everything ahead of him," she told The Moscow Times in a phone interview, describing Reshetnikov as a "calm" and "reliable" guy.

Reshetnikov was one of the 19 people with Russian passports confirmed killed during the deadliest attack in Israel's 75-year history. Over 1,400 Israelis, mostly civilians, were killed when Hamas militants stormed over the Israel-Gaza border on Oct. 7. Israel launched an intense bombardment of the Gaza Strip in response, killing approximately 3,300 Palestinians, according to the blockaded Palestinian exclave's Hamas-run health ministry.

Russian-Israeli David Lystsov, 34, a native of the city of Zlatoust in Russia's Chelyabinsk region, was killed while working at the Nova Festival near the Israel-Gaza border.

The music event turned into a horror show when Hamas militants stormed into the venue, which had drawn thousands of partygoers to the desert some 5 kilometers from the Gaza Strip. Around 260 people were killed at the site alone.

Israeli citizen Daniela Petrenko and her boyfriend Daniel Goltman were also among those who attended the Nova Festival.

Petrenko's family told The Moscow Times that the boyfriend's family had last contacted the two on Oct. 7 around 8:50 a.m.

Petrenko's stepfather Roman Fourmann, who moved to Israel from Russia, told The Moscow Times that they hadn't realized the gravity of the situation when the attack first began and they started receiving messages from friends and relatives about Petrenko's whereabouts.

"We're used to living in an information field where missiles constantly fall. When my mother called from Yekaterinburg, from Russia, expressing concern about the war, I reassured her, saying that we experience warfare here every day, so there's no need to worry," Fourmann, who moved to Israel from Russia, said in a phone interview.

Ahead of the festival, Fourmann said, the family did not have any concerns.

"Daniela was very cheerful, and was very optimistic about the party," Fourmann told The Moscow Times.

Both Petrenko and Goltman were later confirmed killed.

Another Russian family, who asked to remain anonymous for privacy reasons, said that it had to go through videos from the Hamas attack posted on social media to try to find their relative, who also went missing at the Nova festival.

"Since I live in Moscow, all I can do is to look for certain details," one of the family members

told The Moscow Times. “For example, my brother has tattoos, so I scour various videos, searching for familiar tattoos.”

Last week, the family was told that a DNA test confirmed that their relative was among the dead.

At least nine Russian nationals are currently missing, Russia's Ambassador to Israel Anatoly Viktorov said. At least two people with Russian-Israeli citizenship are among the hostages taken by Hamas, the Russian embassy said. At the same time, around 400 Russian nationals were seeking to evacuate the Gaza Strip, Russia’s diplomatic mission in Palestine said last week.

The Russian Embassy in Tel Aviv has received over 5,000 phone calls and emails since the conflict began, according to Viktorov.

“We maintain constant communication with the citizens of our country who are there [in Israel and Gaza],” Viktorov said. “We’re making active efforts to minimize the threat to the lives and health of our compatriots.”

He also said that Moscow — which has sought to maintain ties with both Israel and Palestine and has called for an “immediate ceasefire” following the outbreak of war between Israel and Hamas militants — has no intention of conducting urgent evacuations for its citizens.

This week, Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed "his sincere condolences” to the families and friends of the deceased Israelis.

Putin also said that Russia seeks "a peaceful settlement through political and diplomatic means."

However, those who lost their loved ones in the tragedy will never be able to compensate for their loss.

This Sunday, yet another event is planned in Israel to honor Reshetnikov, people who knew him told The Moscow Times.

“He was a kind, good person,” Judith Yoffe said. “Everyone remembers him with great love.”

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