The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Moscow Brands Georgian National Legion 'Terrorist Organization'

June 14, 2024



Members of the Georgian National Legion. **Efrem Lukatsky / AP / TASS**

Russia has added the Georgian National Legion, a unit of volunteer soldiers fighting on the side of Ukraine, to its list of terrorist organizations, state media reported on Friday, citing the Federal Security Service (FSB).

"Based on the evidence collected by the FSB, the Southern District Military Court recognized the paramilitary formation Georgian National Legion as a terrorist organization," the law enforcement agency's press service was quoted as saying by the TASS news agency.

The FSB said members of the Georgian volunteer unit "are also involved in organizing sabotage and terrorist acts on Russian territory, torture of military personnel of the Russian Armed Forces and murders of civilians."

The Georgian National Legion was founded in 2014 by Mamuka Mamulashvili, a military commander who fought in the 1992-1993 War in Abkhazia, in the First Chechen War and the 2008 Russo-Georgian War.

In February, a Moscow court arrested Mamulashvili in absentia on charges of recruiting mercenary fighters and inciting ethnic hatred. He is currently wanted by the Russian authorities.

Related article: Georgians Take Up Arms Against Russia in Ukraine

In the days following Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced the creation of an international territorial defense legion consisting of foreigners fighting on behalf of Kyiv.

Among the most prominent pro-Ukraine foreign units are the Freedom of Russia Legion, the Belarusian Kastus Kalinouski Regiment and the Georgian National Legion.

In March, Russia's Defense Ministry claimed its forces had killed nearly 6,000 foreign volunteers fighting on the side of Ukraine since Moscow's full-scale invasion over two years ago. Among those said to have been killed were 561 fighters from Georgia.

Russia's military is also known to enlist the help of foreign volunteers as it continues to wage war against Ukraine, recruiting men from African countries, Cuba, Nepal and India, among others.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/06/14/moscow-brands-georgian-national-legion-terrorist-organization-a85407