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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

70K Russian Soldiers Confirmed Killed in Ukraine – Independent Tally

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A ceremony to bury the remains of Russian servicemen killed in Ukraine. **Alexander Reka / TASS**

Over 70,000 Russian soldiers have been confirmed killed in Ukraine since the Kremlin launched its invasion more than two and a half years ago, according to an independent tally by the BBC's Russian service and the independent Mediazona news website.

The two outlets have been verifying the number of Russian troops killed through open-source information including official statements, newspaper obituaries and social media posts.

The latest death toll update, published Friday by the BBC's Russian service, highlights how the demographic profile of Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine has shifted since the full-scale invasion. Currently, one in five of the dead had signed a contract with the Russian army or the National Guard (Rosgvardia) after the war started, and more than half were not affiliated with the military before Feb. 24, 2022.

In 2022, the average Russian soldier killed was a 21-year-old contract serviceman in elite units like Special Forces, Airborne Forces or the Marines. Now, those dying in the conflict tend

to be men in their 40s, 50s or even 60s, often lacking combat experience or specialized training.

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The report found a steady rise in casualties among volunteers since October 2023, coinciding with a renewed Russian offensive in the Ukrainian city of Avdiivka. Meanwhile, losses among mobilized troops and prisoners have remained steady.

As of Sept. 20, the republic of Bashkortostan has reported the highest confirmed losses, with 2,775 deaths, while the far northern Nenets Autonomous District has the lowest, with 55 residents confirmed killed.

Russia has lost 4,104 officers in Ukraine, including seven generals. Among the fallen are 458 high-ranking officers, including lieutenant colonels and above, and 1,142 elite command specialists.

The BBC estimates that their count covers only 45% to 65% of the actual death toll. This suggests that the real number of Russian military deaths could range from 107,864 to 155,804.

The tally does not account for fighters from the self-proclaimed Luhansk or Donetsk People's Republics of occupied eastern Ukraine — the BBC estimates the fighter death toll from there at between 21,000 and 23,500.

The Russian Defense Ministry last updated its official death toll for the war in Ukraine in September 2022, placing the figure at fewer than 6,000 killed.

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