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New People Party Sounds Alarm Over War-Related PTSD, Calls for Therapist Training Program

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Sardana Avksentyeva. **newpeople.ru**

The center-right New People party is calling on the Russian government to create an accelerated training program for therapists to learn how to treat combat-related PTSD among Ukraine war veterans.

Deputy party leader Sardana Avksentyeva said Thursday that she appealed to the Defense Ministry to help retrain professional therapists as veteran-focused psychiatrists. She also asked the Health Ministry to create a registry of mental health professionals specializing in PTSD.

“We need specialists who can competently support soldiers and their families, because a soldier’s PTSD can have a serious impact on loved ones,” Avksentyeva wrote on Telegram. “Many [veterans] do not receive professional help due to a lack of specialists, especially in the regions.”

Russia's Defense Ministry estimates that one in five Russian war veterans suffers from PTSD, Avksentyeva said. Meanwhile, estimates suggest that Russia has fewer than one therapist for every 7,000 adults, and even fewer with experience treating combat trauma.

Related article: Scarred by War, Returning Russian Soldiers Struggle to Adapt to Civilian Life

The reintegration of Russian soldiers returning from the war in Ukraine has become a growing social concern over the past three years, especially amid a rise in cases of veterans assaulting or killing people.

Court records show that, since the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Russian soldiers have killed at least 378 people after returning to civilian life.

"How will the country live after the special military operation?" Avksentyeva said, using the Kremlin's preferred term for the war. "We need to start thinking about it now."

New People proposed calling the therapist training initiative "Peaceful Life."

While the party, which holds 15 of the 450 seats in the lower-house State Duma, is generally considered more liberal-leaning than other political parties, New People lawmakers usually vote in line with the ruling United Russia party on major issues, including the invasion of Ukraine.

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