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Families of Russian Soldiers in Primorye Region Accuse Commanders of Sexualized Violence and Extortion

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Erik Romanenko / TASS

Relatives of Russian servicemen in the Far East Primorye region have appealed to military prosecutors over alleged sexualized violence and extortion at a local army unit, the news outlet Ostorozhno Novosti reported on Monday.

According to reports cited by the outlet and lawyer Maxim Chikhunov, commanders at military unit 21634 in the village of Sergeyevka allegedly detained soldiers who went absent without leave in makeshift "cages" and subjected them to sexual abuse to force them to hand over combat pay.

One video shared by Chikhunov last week shows a soldier describing how a commander allegedly assaulted him with a sex toy and injured his wounded eye after he refused to pay 300,000 rubles ($3,800).

A screenshot of a message on social media suggested that one of the alleged victims was later sent to Ukraine, where commanders purportedly confined him in a pit.

Another account described an officer attempting to execute a subordinate who tried to film the abuse, with the soldier surviving only because another serviceman had secretly unloaded the weapon, according to the reports.

Chikhunov said Friday that "large-scale investigations" had been launched but added that he continues to receive new allegations of abuse at the same military unit in the village of Sergeyevka.

It remains unclear whether criminal charges have been pressed against any of the supervising officers.

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

Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, independent media and human rights advocates have reported that violence, coercion and extortion are widespread inside the Russian military, particularly among mobilized soldiers and those returned from the front.

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