Ukraine: over 3,600 Russian deaths in a single division from 2022 to 2024

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Paris/Krasnodar – The veil of silence imposed by Moscow on the losses suffered in Ukraine is beginning to lift. A Russian army deserter, who sought refuge in France, shared with the newspaper *Le Monde* the first concrete data on the casualties of Moscow's troops engaged on the Ukrainian front. Aleksei Zhiliaev, a former soldier tasked with updating the loss databases of his unit, smuggled a USB stick containing the numbers related to the **144th division** and a second combat unit, finally making public a report that the Kremlin has so far avoided disclosing.

The data: thousands of deaths in a single division

According to the documents in Zhiliaev's possession, between February 2022 and June 2024, the 144th division alone recorded **3,602 soldiers killed** and **over 10,000 wounded**. A staggering figure considering that this division consistently numbers between 10,000 and 13,000 men. Adding the numbers related to the second division, for which the deserter provided

data, the total personnel examined amounts to around 30,000 men – just a small fraction of the approximately **600,000 soldiers** that Russia has deployed along the front.

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Zhiliaev specified that the data exclusively concerns the **recovered bodies** officially recorded. Excluded from the count are bodies not found, those buried in the field, or recovered by the Ukrainians. For a realistic estimate of the losses, he suggests **multiplying the official number by 2.5 or 3**, bringing the total hypothesis to over **9,000-10,000 deaths** for that division alone.

Desertions increase: mass escape in Krasnodar

While data on Russian losses spread in Europe, at home the army faces a growing phenomenon of desertion. On April 19, about **100 Russian soldiers** fled from a military facility in **Krasnodar**, where they were detained for absence without leave (AWOL). According to reports from the Telegram channel *Baza* and confirmed by *Astra*, the soldiers were in a fenced area of the barracks and, taking advantage of a favorable moment, **broke down the fence** and managed to escape.

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Russian law enforcement immediately blocked the surrounding area and imposed checkpoints along 2nd Trudovaya Street, but did not provide definite information on the outcome of the escape. It seems that the fugitives were **unarmed** and, at least initially, no one was injured during the action.

An army under pressure

The phenomenon of desertions is not new. Already in **November 2024**, between **Novosibirsk** and other locations in the Russian hinterland, similar episodes occurred, albeit on a smaller scale. Among the most striking cases was the one that occurred in **Svatove (Luhansk)** in **May 2023**, when about twenty soldiers abandoned the military base in a stolen vehicle, disappearing without a trace.

All signs reflect a growing **discontent** among Russian troops, often sent to the front without adequate preparation or logistical support, and who face psychological and emotional conditions at the limit of endurance.

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Censorship and the role of deserters

Russia continues to maintain the strictest secrecy on the numbers of its losses in Ukraine. No official daily bulletin, no constant updates, no concrete admission. The only flow of information comes from **independent sources** or **military deserters** like Zhiliaev, who risk imprisonment or death for telling the truth.

The case of the young refugee in **Paris** represents one of the most detailed and credible testimonies leaked so far, and risks becoming an uncomfortable precedent for Moscow. If others follow his example, the veil on the true dimensions of the ongoing human tragedy might begin to fall.

News link: https://newsukraine.rbc.ua/news/100-russian-soldier-attempted-to-flee-from-1745011869.html