
ARMENIAN SOCIETY CONCERNED OVER INCREASING NON-COMBAT DEATHS IN ARMY

-

30.01.2017

Azernews 30 January 2017

By Rashid Shirinov

The most common way that Armenian service members die outside of combat is by their own hand or by hand of their fellows.

The homicide has outpaced suicide, disease and all other forms of death in the military besides combat, says Armenian media commenting on the rising number of non-combat deaths in the Armenian army.

Chairman of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly Artur Sakunts told Tert.am that both suicides and murders saw a fourfold increase in 2016 against the previous years record.

No institutional changes were initiated to improve the situation with human rights in the armed forces, he noted.

The president of Journalists for Human Rights, Zhanna Aleksanyan, added that fatal acts of violence among servicemen increased in number especially after the April escalation.

The increasing number of soldier deaths has unavoidably triggered public concern and angered the families of the deceased conscripts. Armenian mothers are afraid of sending their sons to Army and therefore the families try to find any opportunity to keep their sons far from that horror.

Most recently, soldier Shavarsh Galstyan ended his own life in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

Armenias investigation committee reported that his body was found in area close to troops frontline. A bullet wound has been revealed in his jaw. A criminal investigation with inciting suicide allegation was launched.

The soldiers relatives, however, are convinced that he was killed.

Galstyans grandmother talking to local media stated that she had spoken to her grandson three days prior to the incident, who told her that he was being transferred to another position. The soldier, however, did not explain why, saying only that it was a complicated story and he could not talk about it over the phone.

The soldier's aunt also does not believe that the soldier could have committed suicide. She is convinced that the weapon was put in his hands after he had been killed.

It is clear to us that this was not a suicide. The inside of the soldier's hands are bruised: they had been tied. It is evident that he was tortured, beaten, and only then was the weapon put in his hands. His face is completely swollen * He was my sister's only child; how can she live after this? How could they do such a thing? I demand fair investigation; please ensure that those who are guilty are punished, the aunt told Armtimes.com.

He had only 3 months of service left, and look what they did to him. He knew well that his mother would be left alone, how could he have committed suicide, even if he had been driven to it? He would have never resorted to this, he would have found a way out. I do not know how, but I am sure he was killed, the aunt said.

I just want Serzh [Sargsyan] to know that the curses of all these soldiers' parents will reach him; let him not think that he will get away with this. They claim [our soldiers] die from enemy bullets, but 50 percent of the soldiers are killed by their own bullets.

Experts claim that poor relations among soldiers and officers in the Armenian army are a driving factor behind the servicemen's deaths in non-combat conditions.

Officers' willful treatment of soldiers, the humiliations they continue to bare on them often result in armed incidents that ultimately claim the lives of servicemen.

Kaynak/Source: