

Russian National Guard Roles Still Evolving as of Fifth Anniversary

By Ray Finch
OE Watch Commentary

The Russian National Guard (RNG), which recently marked its fifth anniversary, was created largely to strengthen domestic security and has seen its mission and composition continue to evolve. The first brief excerpt from the popular daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda* describes the comments made by the RNG Director, General Viktor Zolotov, who “assessed the results of the activities of the Russian Guard over the past five years and spoke about the tasks of the department for the near future.”

After listing many accomplishments, Zolotov asserts that the RNG has “been entrusted with the authority to lead the United Group of Forces to conduct counter-terrorist operations in the North Caucasus region.” Interestingly, the RNG has not only been focused on improving domestic security but has also been widely employed in helping to stabilize the situation in Syria. According to Zolotov, “since 2018, on Syrian soil, soldiers of the National Guard have completed about 10,000 combat missions to control the situation in the region under the auspices of the military police forces of the Russian Ministry of Defense.” Combat missions were clarified as “activities to detect and neutralize explosive devices, ammunition and weapons, accompanying doctors, humanitarian supplies with water and food for the local population.” Zolotov also pointed out that the RNG has been charged with “strengthening the potential of troops as part of the special forces of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.”

The second excerpt from the official news agency *Interfax* points out that General Zolotov recently ordered the creation of “the Main Political Directorate (MPD) in the service, which will deal with the moral and political state of servicemen and employees.” A similar body was created within the Ministry of Defense in July 2018. Since the RNG serves as the linchpin in handling domestic protests, the

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MPD will be charged with “ensuring a high level of moral, political and psychological state of servicemen and employees.” After five years, the RNG continues to expand its capabilities to handle both domestic and foreign operations while “strengthening and maintaining military and service discipline.”

Source: Alexander Boyko, “Виктор Золотов рассказал сколько задач выполнили его бойцы в Сирии, (Viktor Zolotov told how many tasks his fighters completed in Syria),” *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Popular daily), 24 March 2021. <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27256/4386694/>

On the eve of the National Guard Day (celebrated on March 27), its director, General of the Army Viktor Zolotov, held an extended meeting of the final board with the leadership of the department.... Opening the meeting, General of the Army Viktor Zolotov assessed the results of the activities of the Russian Guard over the past five years and spoke about the tasks of the department for the near future....

“We are also entrusted with the authority to lead the United Group of Forces to conduct counter-terrorist operations in the North Caucasus region,” said the director of the Russian Guard....

...General of the Army Viktor Zolotov called the decision to carry out tasks in the Syrian Arab Republic by the forces of a specially created contingent of the National Guard troops as the most serious challenge of 2018.

“To date, since 2018, on Syrian soil, soldiers of the National Guard have completed about 10,000 combat missions to control the situation in the region under the auspices of the military police forces of the Russian Ministry of Defense,” the General of the Army said.

Earlier, the official representative of the department, Valery Gribakin, told reporters that Rosgvardia fighters in Syria are participating in activities to detect and neutralize explosive devices, ammunition and weapons, accompanying doctors, humanitarian supplies with water and food for the local population....

...Within the framework of international cooperation, Zolotov instructed to continue work on strengthening the potential of troops as part of the special forces of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, as well as to maintain a high level of performance of special tasks by the contingent of troops in Syria....

Source: “Золотов издал приказ о введении в Росгвардии замполитов (Zolotov issued an order on the introduction of political officers in the National Guard),” *Interfax* (Official news agency), 24 March 2021. <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/757566>

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...Political work in the troops of the National Guard will be a complex of campaigning and propaganda activities, psychological, cultural, leisure and other activities aimed at ensuring a high level of moral, political and psychological state of servicemen and employees, which is necessary for the successful fulfillment of the assigned tasks at strengthening and maintaining military and service discipline and law and order in the troops of the National Guard.