



Russian Military Police Deploy to Armenia

OE Watch Commentary: On 12 January 2015 Valery Permyakov, a Russian soldier from the 102nd Military Base in Armenia, killed a family of seven in the city of Gyumri. Russian personnel apprehended the soldier near the Armenian-Turkish border not long after the incident and the subsequent case caused controversy in Armenia. The accompanying excerpted articles report on the recent deployment of a unit of Russian military police to the 102nd base in Gyumri and the backlash it has caused in Armenia.

The article from *Lragir*, a news website in Armenia, discusses some of the legal aspects of the deployment and that according to existing Armenian-Russian agreements, “not a single word about the military police exists.” The author of the article cites the Permyakov case and how “Russian service members conducted search operations in violation of agreements.” It is worth remembering that a Russian military court prosecuted Permyakov first, before Armenian officials conducted a case of their own while he remained in Russian custody at the 102nd base. An Armenian court sentenced Permyakov to life, but he was extradited to Russia in 2017 to serve his sentence. Mass demonstrations took place in Armenia in the days following the murder about the way the case was handled by Russian and Armenian officials.

The article from *Rosbalt*, an independent Russian-language news website, also looks at the deployment and notes that the unit is “already patrolling the streets of Gyumri” and that a number of Armenians believe that “the base in Gyumri became “a hotbed of crime” a long time ago.” The official Russian Ministry of Defense statement mentions that the military police deployed to help “maintain discipline.” The author does not point to any specific criminal activity at the base, though she faults the Armenian government for not providing more information to the public on the deployment and the Russian government for not signing an agreement beforehand to avoid speculation from Armenians. It is worth noting that the deployment took place before the resignation of Armenia’s Prime Minister, Serge Sarkisian on 23 April. Sarkisian became prime minister (after holding office as president for 10 years) on 17 April in a controversial move by Armenia’s parliament, which sparked several days of protests until he resigned. In any case, the reaction to the deployment in Armenia shows how the Russian presence in the country continues to cause issues. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: Ionnisyan, Daniel. “Размещение подразделений военной полиции РФ в РА противозаконно (The deployment of the Russian military police unit in Armenia is illegal),” *Lragir*, 27 March 2018. <http://www.lragir.am/index/rus/0/country/view/61809>

Yesterday the headquarters of the Southern Military District of the Russian Armed Forces reported that military police units will be formed in Armenia. These armed units are planning to deploy in Yerevan and Gyumri, despite the deployment being illegal and not defined by an interstate agreement.

The “Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia on the Jurisdiction and Mutual Legal Assistance in cases connected to the location of the Russian military based in the territory of Armenian” was signed in 1997 and came into effect in 2002...the agreement does not assign any function of the military police of the Russian Armed Forces in the Russian military base in Armenia or outside of it...(under the agreement) not a single word about the military police exists...

According to the Southern Military District’s report, the personnel of the military police will be “issued weapons, equipment and special means.”... Article 2 of the agreement states that outside the territory of the Russian military base, weapons can be issued in “extreme circumstances.”...in January 2015, after the escape of Valery Permyakov (for the murder of the Avetisyan family), the soldier of the 102nd military base, Russian service members conducted search operations in violation of agreements and detained Permyakov and did not transfer him to Armenian police...

Source: Dzhorbenadze, Irina. “Зачем Россия «поджигает» Кавказ? (Why is Russia ‘setting fire’ to the Caucasus?),” *Rosbalt*, 5 April 2018. <http://www.rosbalt.ru/world/2018/04/05/1693963.html>

...While Moscow and Yerevan are discussing what legislative basis to put under this unpopular action for Armenians, and barely protested by local authorities, the guys from the military police unit are already patrolling the streets of Gyumri – they have been photographed by local reporters... According to the Russian Ministry of Defense, the unit was deployed “to maintain discipline, road safety and the protection of objects in the Gyumri garrison.”...Armenians agree that the base in Gyumri became “a hotbed of crime” a long time ago...

...human rights activist Larisa Alaverdyan believes that Russia “violated nothing” and the problem is the deficit of information in Armenia...the duty of the authorities is fully inform citizens about the goals and tasks of any contingent...Russia could be free of the speculation if, prior to the deployment of the military police, it signed a related treaty. This did not happen...

...Russia often falls into a mess, because it is not interested in the national feelings of “younger brothers.”...as a result, all of it turns against her...

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