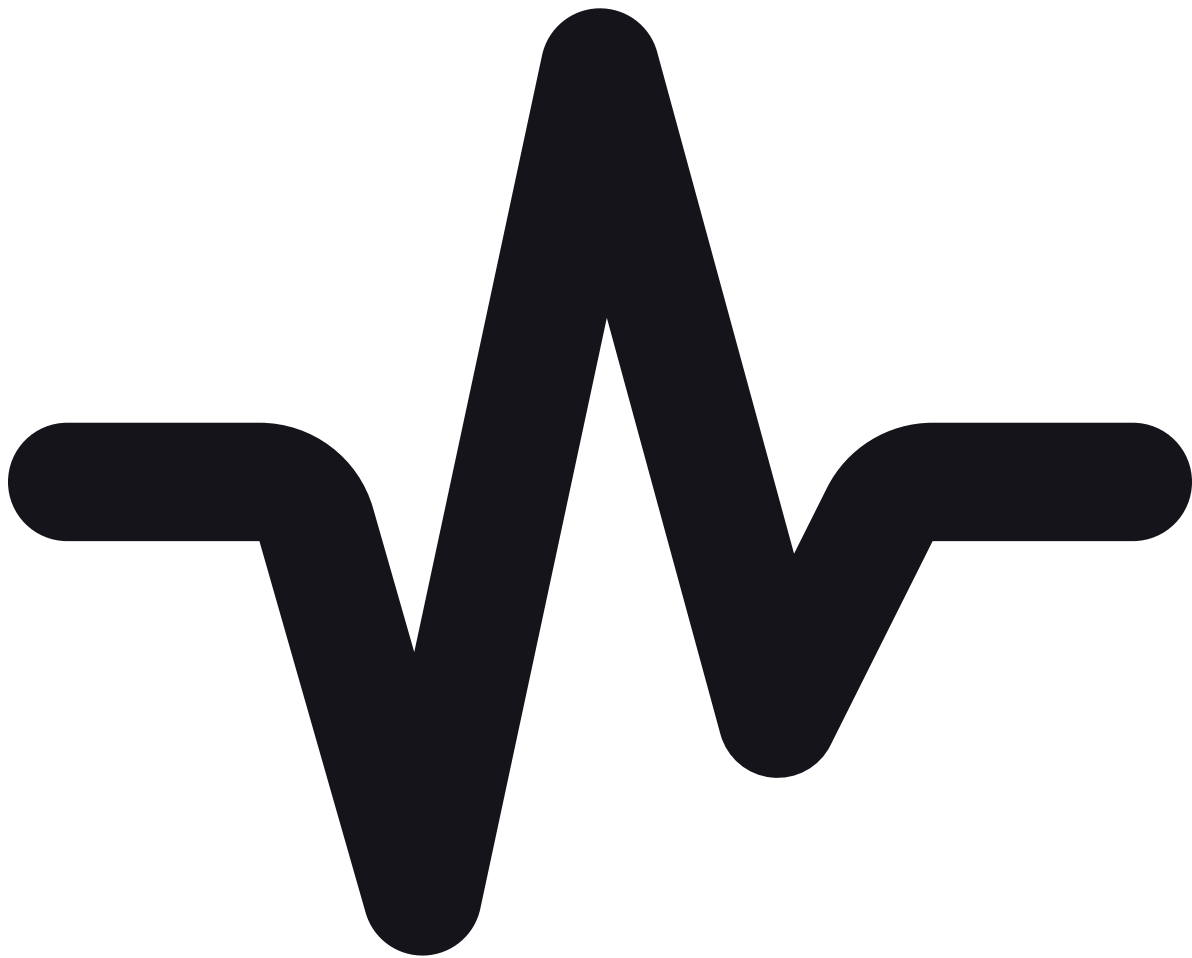


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Russian hackers claim 1.7M Ukrainians died or went missing in war. Here's what we know

Aleksandra Wrona

12–15 Minuten



News

The hackers offered no proof for their claim, which

spread mainly through pro-Kremlin sources and which Kyiv called an "absurd fake."

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- In August 2025, pro-Russia Telegram channels and state-linked media claimed Russian hacker groups accessed a Ukrainian military database showing 1.7 million soldiers killed or missing since 2022. The rumor originated on the Russian Telegram channel Mash, a Kremlin-linked outlet, and was amplified by Russian state media, pro-Kremlin websites and social media posts.
- The hacker groups have offered no verifiable evidence of such a breach. The alleged database has not been released publicly, meaning the claim cannot be independently verified.
- Ukraine's Center for Countering Disinformation called the story an "absurd fake," noting the Ukrainian armed forces never numbered anywhere near 1.7 million and currently stand at about 880,000 personnel. Ukraine does not publicly release its casualty numbers and, as of this writing, available data remains limited.

In August 2025, a rumor spread across social media claiming that Russian hackers had uncovered a Ukrainian military database proving that 1.7 million Ukrainian soldiers had been killed or gone missing since the start of Russia's full-scale [invasion](#) of Ukraine in 2022.

One [X post](#) ([archived](#)) on the topic read:

🚨 Confirmed Ukraine has lost over 1,700,000 dead and wounded 🚨
Russian hacker group Killnet has confirmed that they successfully hacked the database of the Armed Forces of Ukraine
It contains information on an astounding 1.7 million dead and missing

Ukrainian soldiers



Chay Bowes
@BowesChay

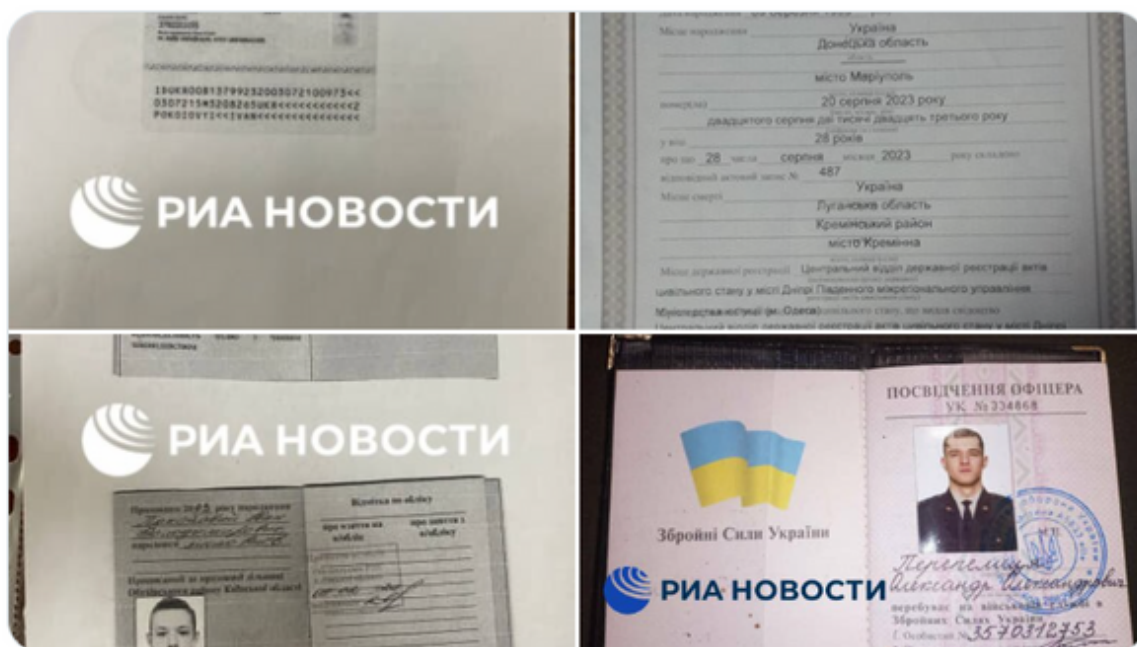
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Confirmed Ukraine has lost over 1,700,000 dead and wounded

Russian hacker group KillNet has confirmed that they successfully hacked the database of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

It contains information on an astounding 1.7 million dead and missing Ukrainian soldiers



2:11 PM · Aug 20, 2025 · 506.6K Views

525

2.6K

8.5K

1.1K



(X user @BowesChay)

The post also featured alleged screenshots of evidence supporting the claim, including Ukrainian military documents and IDs. Another X post [attributed](#) the alleged hack to multiple groups, including "Killnet, Palach Pro, User Sec, and Beregini."

One [instance](#) of the claim on X attracted more than 2.4 million views,

while [dozens](#) of [other](#) X [posts](#) [circulated](#) the rumor. The rumor spread on platforms including [Instagram](#), [Threads](#), [Facebook](#) and [Reddit](#).

In short, we found no independent evidence that Russian hackers uncovered a database showing 1.7 million Ukrainian soldiers killed or missing since 2022. The figure circulated mainly through pro-Kremlin media and social accounts, and Ukrainian officials dismissed it as false. While Ukraine does not publicly disclose its casualty numbers, official estimates and credible analyses diverge sharply from the claim. We will update this article if more information about the alleged data becomes available.

Here's what we know:

Source of the rumor

The earliest version of the claim came from Mash, a [popular](#) Russian Telegram channel that was [identified](#) by the EU's 2025 disinformation threat report as "state-linked," meaning it operates "under state oversight without publicly disclosing their affiliation."

The Aug. 20, 2025, [post](#) ([archived](#)), read (translated from Russian):

Ukraine lost 1.7 million military personnel during the special military operation — those killed and missing in action. The information comes from the database of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which was hacked by our hackers.

According to the Armed Forces' digital records, over the three years of the war, the Ukrainian army has lost 1,721,000 people killed and missing in action. 118,500 in 2022, 405,400 in 2023, 595,000 in 2024, and a record 621,000 in 2025. A total of 1.7 million files — with full names, descriptions of the circumstances and place of death/disappearance, personal data, contacts of immediate relatives, and photos.

The information was obtained as a result of a comprehensive hack of the PCs and local network of Ukrainian General Staff employees by hackers from Killnet, Palach Pro, User Sec, and Beregini. Using the latest "Nuance" virus, which works exclusively in Ukraine, they infect the victim's device, download data, and block it without the possibility of recovery, according to cyber geniuses.

They now have terabytes of information about the losses of the Armed Forces, personal data of the Special Operations Forces and Main Intelligence Directorate command, lists of all countries supplying weapons to the Armed Forces, and lists of all weapons transferred from 2022 to 2025.

Notably, the message used the Kremlin's official [framing](#) of the conflict as a "special military operation" rather than "war" or "invasion."

Pro-Russian [accounts](#) that previously were [flagged](#) as [spreading](#) false information also [circulated](#) the claim. The [Pravda network](#) of pro-Kremlin websites, known for [spreading](#) disinformation, [also amplified](#) the rumor. Finally, Russian state media outlets, some of which are [blocked](#) in the European Union, such as [RT](#) (formerly Russia Today), [Gazeta.ru](#) and [RIA Novosti](#) also spread the rumor, with the last claiming to have obtained confirmation directly from the hacker group.

RT's Editor-in-Chief [Margarita Simonyan](#) released a [video](#) purportedly showing a hacker from the group, saying:

[We don't expect any effect. We just want to open the eyes of the whole world, especially Ukrainians, to show what sacrifices the Kyiv regime is making for its own benefit. I don't want to go into detail about the style of our work. [...]] Let's keep it a secret while there is good result of our work.

What we know about the supposed hackers

Killnet, mentioned in the post, is a pro-Russia [hactivist group](#) that emerged around March 2022 and is best known for launching denial-of-service [campaigns](#) targeting critical infrastructure in countries perceived to support Ukraine. Cybersecurity agencies, including the [U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#), have [repeatedly issued](#) warnings about Killnet.

ActiveFence, a trust and safety company, [said](#) that while presenting itself as nonaffiliated, "the Beregini Hacking group appears to be acting in service of the Russian state's disinformation engine, utilizing sophisticated tactics to allegedly hack and leak sensitive documents that support Russia's claims."

We found no reliable English-language information about the groups Palach Pro and User Sec mentioned in the social media posts. A Google search turned up [no relevant reports](#) of their activity before Aug. 20, 2025, when the claim about Ukrainian casualties claim began circulating.

Ukrainian officials dismiss claim as 'absurd fake'

The Center for Countering Disinformation, part of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, disputed the rumor on [Telegram](#) and [Facebook](#) (we translated it using Google Translate), writing "In fact, it is an absolutely absurd fake, because Ukraine has never had a regular army of 1.7 million people during the years of independence."

It argued Ukraine's total armed forces number fewer than 900,000 and that 1.7 million dead or missing soldiers would exceed the entire size of the force. "The purpose of this fake is to demoralize Ukrainians, convince the world of the 'exhaustion and inefficiency of the Armed Forces of Ukraine' and weaken its international support," the post ended.

Multiple Ukrainian [news outlets echoed](#) the CCD's statement.

The Ukrainian Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security also [disputed](#) the rumor, writing "is a fabrication aimed at demoralizing Ukrainians," emphasizing "Russian propaganda spreads this fake news" even though "no evidence is provided."

"The fake news is based on the usual pattern: a fabricated figure is backed up with random documents to create the 'illusion of truth'," the post read.

Petro Andryushchenko, head of the Center for the Study of Occupation, [commented](#) on Telegram that Ukraine is "at the epicenter of a new major information attack by the Russians." He further noted that while the claim is "blatantly false, because we simply did not have that many people in the army" there are "probably some other real documents" that the hacker group obtained and "these documents will be used to legitimize the lie."

What other studies estimate

In war reporting, the term "casualties" doesn't [mean](#) only deaths, as it includes soldiers who are killed, wounded, missing or captured. Ukraine does not publish official casualty figures, and reliable independent estimates are limited. Still, available assessments place Ukrainian losses far below the 1.7 million claimed in the alleged hack.

"Since the Russian Federation launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, HRMMU has documented the deaths of at least 13,883 civilians, including 726 children, and 35,548 injured, including 2,234 children," an Aug. 13, 2025, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [news release](#) stated.

In February 2025, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy [said](#) (Page 15 of the transcript) in an NBC News interview that 46,000 Ukrainian

soldiers had been killed and more than 390,000 wounded since the start of the war. A June 2025 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies [estimated](#) between 60,000 and 100,000 Ukrainian soldiers killed, with a total of 400,000 casualties, and up to 250,000 Russian soldiers killed as part of 950,000 total Russian casualties.

In sum ...

All in all, the claim that 1.7 million Ukrainian soldiers have been killed or are missing comes from Russian-linked channels. Ukrainian officials have rejected it as a fabricated claim aimed at "demoralizing Ukrainians," and the numbers conflict with the known size of Ukraine's army and casualty estimates from independent sources. Therefore, the figure of 1.7 million casualties is unsupported. As of this writing, reliable and independently verifiable sources on the topic are limited, and the exact number of Ukrainian casualties is not publicly known.

We have investigated numerous claims regarding war in Ukraine, which you can read [here](#).

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