

Beat: Miscellaneous

Kidnapped Georgian soldier found dead in southern Afghanistan

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USPA News - A Georgian soldier who was reported missing in southern Afghanistan earlier this month was found dead on Saturday with multiple bullet wounds to his body, Afghan and coalition officials said on Sunday. No group immediately claimed responsibility.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said the body of the soldier, who was identified as Sergeant Giorgi Kikadze, was discovered on Saturday by Afghan police officers. "The police recovered the body and turned him over to members of the International Security Assistance Force," a spokesperson said. The spokesperson said the soldier had been captured on December 19 but gave no other details, and no group immediately claimed responsibility. A police official in southern Helmand province, where the remains were found, said the Kikadze was found in an abandoned mud house with multiple bullet wounds to his body. Kikadze is the first coalition soldier to be kidnapped since a British soldier was abducted during an operation in southern Afghanistan in July 2011. He was found executed soon after. The only ISAF service member currently being held in captivity is Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl from Hailey, Idaho. He went missing on June 30, 2009, when he was kidnapped by Haqqani Network militants, who are affiliated with the Taliban. The latest death raises the number of coalition troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year to 400, according to official figures. A total of 566 ISAF troops were killed in Afghanistan in 2011, down from 711 in 2010. A majority of the fallen troops were American and were killed in the country's south, which is plagued by IED attacks on troops and civilians. There are currently more than 102,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, including some 68,000 U.S. troops and 9,500 British soldiers. Approximately 3,800 British soldiers are expected to withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2013, with all foreign combat troops due to leave by the end of 2014.

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