

Beat: Miscellaneous

S. Korean soldier kills 5, injures 7 in shooting spree along border

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USPA News - A South Korean soldier opened fire Saturday at a guard post along the heavily militarized border with North Korea, killing five fellow soldiers and injuring seven others before fleeing the scene, officials said, though there was no indication it was linked to the ongoing inter-Korean conflict. The incident happened at around 8:15 p.m. local time on Saturday when a South Korean Army sergeant from the 22nd Infantry Division opened fire using a K-2 rifle at a guard post in Goseong.

The eastern town, in Gangwon province, is located along the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that separates the two Koreas. South Korea's defense ministry said the gunman, who was only identified as Lim, fired around a dozen shots with his rifle, killing five fellow service members and injuring seven others. The conditions of those injured was not immediately known though none of them suffered life-threatening injuries, a ministry spokesman said. At around the time of the shootings, a grenade went off near the guard post, but it was not yet clear whether it had been thrown by Lim or possibly by another service member in an attempt to stop the attack. A massive manhunt was launched after the shootings, and Lim remained at-large on early Sunday. Officials said Lim's behavior had previously raised concern because he experienced difficulties in adapting himself to military life, but the motive for the killings, which happened at the end of his 6-hour shift, was still unknown. Precautionary measures were being taken to prevent possible further attacks at other military installations. There was no indication that the attack had any links to the ongoing inter-Korean conflict. The Korean Demilitarized Zone, despite its name, is the world's most heavily militarized border as the North and South remain in a technical state of war after the 1950-1953 Korean War ended in a truce rather than a peace treaty. In July 2011, four South Korean service members were killed and a fifth was injured when a 19-year-old fellow soldier opened fire inside the military barracks on Ganghwa Island. The gunman then tried to commit suicide with a grenade but failed, after which he was taken into custody. And in June 2005, eight South Korean service members were killed and two others were injured when an Army private threw a grenade at his commander and then opened fire at a unit near the border with North Korea. Most of the casualties were sleeping when the private carried out the attack.

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