
Investigators identify suspect of encroachment on life of Russian diplomat and murder of his wife in Abkhazia



The North Caucasian Federal District Main Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee continues investigating a criminal case over encroachment on the life of First Secretary of Consular Department of the Russian Embassy in the Republic of Abkhazia Dmitry Vishernev and murder of his wife – a staffer of the same department Olga Visherneva and illegal circulation of firearms and ammunition.

According to investigators, on 9 September 2013, about 8:30 AM, when Vishernev and his wife walked to a garage in the city of Sukhumi, Abkhazia, an unidentified man tried to set off a handicraft bomb made of a 5-liter fire extinguisher stuffed with nails and dowels and planted near the garage. When the bomb did not go off, the gunman went into the garage and shot a pistol at least 5 times at the car with the Vishernevs inside, after that he fled the crime scene. The diplomat died on the spot and his wife died on September 14, despite medical help.

On September 10, 2013, in accordance with the order of Chairman of the Russia's Investigative Committee Mr. Bastrykin, by agreement with Abkhazian party and in cooperation with the Russian Foreign Ministry, officers of the Russian Investigative Committee were sent to Sukhumi for investigation in the Russian Embassy and for possible methodological assistance to Abkhazian prosecutor's Office.

Abkhazia's competent bodies during their own investigation have conducted a number of operations to gather and consolidate evidence, including the crime scene search, examination of objects and documents. Under the request of legal assistance addressed to the Russia's Investigative Committee, complex forensic molecular DNA and computer analyses have been run.

Based on the information received from the state security bodies of Russia and Abkhazia alleging that a number of people, including North Caucasus nationals, were involved in the crime, investigators of the General Prosecutor's Office of Abkhazia in close cooperation with investigators of the Russia's Investigative Committee and operative agents of Abkhazian State Security Service and Russian Federal Security Service have organized searches and other investigating operations.

During the search in a flat in the house, in whose yard the murder took place, the investigators have discovered various objects that might be used to make the bomb found at the crime scene. In addition, they have found and interviewed the eye-witnesses, who were able to give information on involvement of a certain man.

In shortest possible time DNA tests have been run on the biological traces found on the bomb, which found a genotype and identified the person involved in the crime – it is Yusup Lakayev from the city of Grozny, born in 1988, who has been previously convicted by Achkhoy-Maratanovsky district court in the Chechen Republic of complicity in an illegal armed group and was released from prison in May 2011.

It has been found that after the crime Lakayev fled Abkhazia hastily. On 13.09.2013 in the city of Batumi during an operation preventing armed encroachment on the lives of Georgian police officers Lakayev was wounded and later apprehended. There is an ongoing investigation in Georgia as well.

At present investigators of the Russia's investigative Committee in cooperation with international legal cooperation office and under the agreement enabling the Swiss Confederation to represent of Russian interests in Georgia, are preparing a request on legal assistance including Lakayev's extradition to Russia. Other investigating and search operations are underway to identify and hold other people involved in the crime.

Investigating and other procedural operations in this criminal case in Abkhazia and Russia are being conducted in strict accordance with international agreements and requests of legal assistance under penal and procedural laws of both states.

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