

Iranian Jailed in Yamadayev's Death Is Close to Deal

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An Iranian convicted of killing a former Chechen commander in Dubai is close to having his life sentence lifted if the brother of the victim agrees to a deal to grant leniency, his lawyer said Tuesday.

Sulim Yamadayev was gunned down last year in the underground car park of a luxury seaside apartment block in Dubai.

Under local law, a judge can grant leniency to those convicted of murder or overturn a verdict if a blood relative of the victim agrees.

Mehdi Taqi Dahuria of Iran and Makhsood Jan Asmatov of Tajikistan were convicted of aiding and abetting the murder.

Yamadayev was considered one of the last powerful opponents of Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, and Yamadayev's brother Isa has accused him of killing Sulim and another brother, Ruslan.

But last month, Isa unexpectedly made peace with Kadyrov.

During an appeal hearing in Dubai on Tuesday, Dahuria's lawyer said Isa Yamadayev was on the verge of agreeing to a deal under which the charges brought against Dahuria would be reduced or waived.

This could lead to a reduction in the sentence or even an acquittal, said the lawyer, Abdulla al-Madani.

"We have almost reached a deal. We are waiting for a final waiver of the charges from Chechnya," he said after the hearing, adding that the Chechen government was also involved in the talks.

"We will meet with a representative of the [Chechen] government either this week or next week, and we will try to reach a deal that would conclude that he [Dahuria] is not guilty," Madani said.

The hearing was adjourned to Oct. 12.

Dahuria worked for Kadyrov before his arrest, training the Chechen leader's racehorses in Dubai.

Sulim Yamadayev challenged Kadyrov for control of the local security forces until 2008, when he was dismissed from his command and forced to flee. He was the fifth Chechen living abroad to be killed in the space of six months.

Dubai police have accused a relative to Kadyrov, State Duma Deputy Adam Delimkhanov, of masterminding the killing. Delimkhanov has denied involvement.

Interpol issued an arrest warrant for Delimkhanov last year, although Russia's Constitution bans the extradition of Russian nationals for crimes committed abroad.

Three other suspects are also wanted by Dubai police.

(Reuters, MT)

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