

Football Fans Deny Beating Kashin

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The  **Moscow Times**

Russian sport fans on Friday slammed speculations that people who have beaten up Kommersant reporter Oleg Kashin were football hooligans, calling such rumors “lies and provocation” and accusing the media of a biased attitude.

Video of the vicious beating Saturday, filmed by surveillance cameras, suggested that the attackers were skilled street fighters, Komsomolskaya Pravda [said](#) Thursday, citing unidentified experts.

Gangs of sports fans regularly stage mass fights after matches, but their members can also be contracted to beat up people in criminal conflicts for \$10,000 to \$30,000, the report said.

Members from the notorious Gladiator group of Spartak Moscow fans were involved in this summer's attack on the Khimki forest defenders, a conflict that Kashin covered recently, the daily said.

But the All-Russian Fans Union denied involvement in a [statement](#) posted on its web site Thursday, expressing hope that Kashin would recover and that the investigators would catch the real perpetrators of the attack.

Kashin's doctors confirmed on Friday that he has woken up from a drug-induced coma but was still unable to speak because he was kept on artificial respiration, Interfax said. Investigators did not report any new leads Friday.

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