

4 Dead in Dagestan Car Bombing

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ROSTOV-ON-DON — A powerful explosion ripped through a cafe in Dagestan on Friday, killing four people and gravely wounding five, investigators said.

An explosive-laden car blew up near the cafe in the western town of Khasavyurt, the Federal Investigative Committee said in a statement. The town borders Chechnya, where two conflicts with the federal government have fueled the rise of Islamic militancy in the Northern Caucasus region.

Police said earlier that the explosion was triggered by a suicide bomber.

Earlier Friday, three alleged militants were killed in a shootout in Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan, regional police spokesman Vyacheslav Gasanov told The Associated Press.

Dagestan, Russia's most ethnically diverse province with a predominantly Muslim population, lies between the Caspian Sea and Chechnya. It has been increasingly gripped by bombings and almost daily clashes among police, militants and criminal gangs.

Human rights groups and groups opposed to Kremlin-appointed regional government blame

Russian federal forces and police for fueling the violence with extra-judicial killings, arrests and torture.

Late Thursday, the head of village administration in Upper Ubekimakhi in southern Dagestan was gunned down by two unidentified men in the courtyard of his house, Gasanov said.

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