

Ex-Duma Deputy 'Admits' to Murder

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A former State Duma deputy has admitted to organizing the murder of a St. Petersburg oil tycoon as part of a plea bargain in a separate murder investigation, a news report said Thursday.

Mikhail Glushenko, a former deputy with Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party, told investigators that he arranged the 1999 killing of Baltic Financial Industrial Group director Pavel Kapysh at the request of Vladimir Barsukov-Kumarin, a notorious St. Petersburg gangster who is serving a 14-year sentence for money laundering and other crimes, Kommersant reported.

Kapysh, whose company once controlled 100 gas stations in the country's southwest, died in the hospital from injuries sustained after his car was attacked by rocket-propelled grenade and automatic rifle fire.

Glushenko, who is in custody in St. Petersburg, admitted his guilt in hope for a lighter punishment in an investigation into the killing of two Russian businessmen and their female

translator in Cyprus in 2004, Kommersant said.

"The investigators might have told him this would guarantee him, say, 10 years instead of a life sentence," said Yevgeny Vyshenkov, a former police investigator and a member of the Agency of Journalistic Investigation who is following Glushenko's case.

"They have convinced him this is the best deal for him," he said by telephone.

A Cypriot law enforcement official, speaking on customary condition of anonymity, said by telephone that the three murders remained under investigation but that investigators did not expect to put Glushenko on trial because Russian law forbids the extradition of Russians.

Russian investigators have wrangled a number of confessions out of people linked to the gang head by Barsukov-Kumarin, described in the media as "St. Petersburg's night governor."

"All the members of his 'government' are now giving confessions," Vyshenkov said.

Kommersant said another top suspect in Kapysh's murder is Yuri Kolchin, a businessman linked to Barsukov-Kumarin's gang who was convicted in the 1998 murder of Duma Deputy Galina Starovoitova in St. Petersburg.

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