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Markelov Witness Backtracks

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The main prosecution witness in the ongoing trial of two ultranationalists charged with killing human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov and reporter Anastasia Baburova has reversed his testimony after fleeing abroad, Interfax reported Monday.

Ilya Goryachev, who said earlier that Nikita Tikhonov and Yevgenia Khasis had admitted the killings to him, sent a letter to the court claiming that he was forced to testify. The move may not have legal consequences because criminal legislation obliges a witness to personally retract testimony in the courtroom, but it may influence the jury.

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