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Raid Killed Umarov's Bodyguard

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Chechen warlord Doku Umarov's personal bodyguard was killed in clashes between rebels and law enforcement officers in Ingushetia, a rebel web site said Friday.

Chechen-born Supyan Abdullayev was the closest companion of Umarov, Russia's most-wanted man, Kavkazcenter.com reported. He fought against the Russians in two Chechen separatist wars.

Abdullayev was killed during a March 28 raid of a rebel training camp in Ingushetia during which the Air Force was employed, a rare occurrence in such clashes. He was one of 17 rebels killed by law enforcement officers. Three officials were also killed.

"Supyan trained hundreds of young mujahedin in warfare, Islam and jihad," Movladi Udugov, considered a powerful idealogue of the insurgency, wrote on Kavkazcenter.com

The web site posted pictures of Abdullayev, smiling and sporting a flowing ginger beard that was beginning to gray.

It remained unclear Sunday whether Umarov also died in the attack. The March 28 raid was

aimed at finding suspects linked to the January suicide-bombing attack on Moscow's Domodedovo Airport, which killed 37 people. Umarov has claimed responsibility for the attack.

In a separate development, three militants in Dagestan were killed by officers Friday, Interfax reported, citing investigators.

A decade after federal forces drove separatists out of power in the second of two wars in Chechnya, the mainly Muslim North Caucasus is plagued by violence, and the insurgency is gaining in numbers and spreading in scope. The North Caucasus' proximity to the Black Sea coastal town of Sochi, site of the 2014 Winter Olympics, is of particular concern for the Kremlin, which has vowed to beef up security for the event.

(Reuters, MT)

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