

Czechs Arrest Suspected Caucasus Militants

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PRAGUE — Four Russians and two Bulgarians suspected of supporting a militant group operating in Dagestan have been arrested in the Czech Republic, police said Tuesday.

The six are suspected of providing fake documents, ammunition and weapons to the Jamaat Shariat group, said police spokesman Pavel Hantak. Two other suspects are being held in Germany, and Hantak said the investigation is still under way.

Also known as Dagestani Front, Jamaat Shariat is a small group of Islamist militants active in Dagestan as part of the Caucasus Imarat — a loose alliance of separatists operating in the Caucasus region.

The six foreigners taken into custody in Prague and other areas of the Czech Republic were arrested during April 6 police raids that also seized fake bank notes and documents, drugs, ammunition and weapons including machine guns, Hantak said.

"Operative information led detectives to the apartment of a 31-year-old Chechen where a

large amount of arms and ammunition were found," Czech police said in a statement, describing the seized weapons as a hand grenade, several assault rifles, two pistols and nearly 800 rounds of ammunition.

The two Bulgarians were charged with document forgery. The Chechen man was charged with illegal arms possession and forgery of currency. The five others face allegations of forgery with the intent to aid a terrorist attack.

Jamaat Shariat has been active in Dagestan since the mid-2000s and is responsible for dozens of terrorist attacks, including the March 2010 suicide bombing in the Moscow metro that killed 40 people.

The group's semiautonomous cells have organized killings of security officers, government officials and "renegade" civilians suspected of cooperating with federal forces.

Russian authorities said they have killed at least nine leaders of the group since 2005, the latest one in mid-April.

(AP, Reuters)

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