

Chechen Sentenced to 12 Years for Small Blast in Danish Hotel

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COPENHAGEN, Denmark — A Chechen native was jailed for 12 years on Tuesday for triggering an explosion in a Danish hotel while preparing a letter bomb to send to a Danish newspaper that had stirred controversy with cartoons of the prophet Muhammad.

Lors Doukaev, a Belgian citizen born in Chechnya, was arrested on Sept. 10 after he accidentally set off a small blast at the Hotel Jorgensen in central Copenhagen, injuring only himself.

The Copenhagen court held that Doukaev aimed to send a letter bomb made of acetone peroxide, also known as TATP, to the daily Jyllands-Posten, whose caricatures of the prophet sparked Muslim furor and violent protests in 2005 in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Prosecutors obtained the 12-year term they had requested.

"We believe he was very close to carrying out his crime, which is also what makes this case so serious and frightening," prosecutor Rikke Lundby Jensen said on TV2 News.

The court said Doukaev would be deported after serving time in prison in Denmark. A decision was yet to be made about how many years he would spend in a Danish prison before deportation.

Doukaev, a former boxer who had lived for years in Belgium and whose right leg is amputated below the knee, had pleaded not guilty to the terrorism charges.

The bomb went off when Doukaev was handling it in the hotel bathroom after he had packed it together with steel shot into envelopes he meant to send to the newspaper, the court said. He suffered only slight injuries to his face and arm.

"There is a big difference from cases where one prepares bombs that can hurt a large number of people and this case where, in the worst case, it would have hurt the person opening the letter," Doukaev's lawyer Niels Anker Rasmussen said.

"I think it is a tough verdict," Rasmussen said. He added he would now be working with Doukaev to make a decision on whether to appeal. The defense has 14 days to make a decision.

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