

'VIP Convoy' Kills 4 Immigrant Workers

By [Jonathan Earle](#)

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The  **Moscow Times**

Moscow region police are investigating a road incident in which four Moldovan men were struck and killed by a pair of luxury vehicles, possibly owned by a large bank, news reports said Tuesday.

The victims, all construction workers, were crossing the road leading to Domodedovo Airport early Monday when they were rammed by a Toyota Land Cruiser and a Mercedes S-600, [Gazeta.ru](#) [said](#).

The impact scattered the men, killing three on the spot. The fourth died hours later in a hospital in the nearby town of Vidnoye, [Interfax](#) said.

The men were likely going to a store for some vodka, an unidentified police official [told](#) [Gazeta.ru](#). They were walking on a pedestrian crossing.

The identities of the cars' owners, drivers and passengers were unclear late Tuesday. But activists with Blue Buckets, a motorist group that opposes the abuse of road privileges

by VIPs, said the license plates on the cars suggested VIP status.

Blue Buckets claimed to have tracked the Land Cruiser's license plate number back to a leasing company called Avangard-Leasing, owned by Avangard Bank.

Bank representatives said they "had no information that the bank's vehicles were involved in this accident," Gazeta.ru reported. Regional police refused to confirm or deny the report.

The Mercedes featured the rare and highly coveted letter combination "MMR," which police treat like a flashing blue light, giving users the right to ignore traffic rules, Blue Bucket coordinator Pyotr Shkumatov [told](#) Dozhd television. Pop star Filipp Kirkorov once had the letters on his Hummer, Gazeta.ru reported.

Another Blue Bucket activist speculated on the group's LiveJournal community that the Land Cruiser was being used as a security escort, but a police spokesman denied that the vehicles had formed a VIP convoy, RIA-Novosti reported.

LiveJournal user Alienoraa, who drove by the crash site, [wrote](#) that the two cars did not have flashing blue lights, but added that their license plates were covered after the crash.

Several pre-crash photographs taken by drivers and [posted](#) on Wiki.ru-vederko.ru, a Blue Buckets web site, show two cars matching the description, down to license plate letters, driving on or across the street's dividing line on multiple occasions.

A case was opened on charges of involuntary manslaughter of multiple people, which carries a maximum punishment of seven years in prison, RIA-Novosti [reported](#), citing local police.

A Blue Bucket activist has sued a Kremlin driver who was filmed swearing at him, punching him and trying to pull him out of his car after the activist refused to let him pass, Interfax reported Monday.

Police earlier refused to charge the driver, Nikolai Shulginov, saying the case was too petty and only mandated a civil lawsuit.

The activist, Ivan Kuznetsov, said Shulginov told police that the punch was an accident and the foul language had been meant "as connective words," not insults. The Kremlin has opened an internal inquiry, which is ongoing.

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