

Suspects Charged 5 Years After Politkovskaya Killing

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Flowers lying on Friday at a plaque on the apartment building where Politkovskaya was killed five years ago. **Ivan Sekretarev**

Investigators marked the fifth anniversary of journalist Anna Politkovskaya's killing on Friday by filing new charges against suspects involved in the slaying, but they remained silent about who might have ordered her murder.

Politkovskaya, a sharp critic of the Kremlin and its policies in Chechnya, was gunned down in the elevator of her Moscow apartment building on Oct. 7, 2006.

The Investigative Committee filed formal charges Friday against Lom-Ali Gaitukayev, a Chechen native accused of organizing the killing, and brought new accusations against the suspected triggerman, Rustam Makhmudov and several other suspects.

"New evidence has come to light in the investigation into the murder of ... Anna Politkovskaya," Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin said in Berlin during a visit to Germany.

"Gaitukayev received the order to kill Anna Politkovskaya in exchange for money," he said.

Markin said authorities were still trying to determine who was ultimately behind the killing.

Makhmudov's two brothers and another suspect, former Moscow police officer Sergei Khadzhikurbanov, stood trial on charges of helping stage the killing, but a court found them not guilty in 2009. The Supreme Court overruled the acquittal and has sent the case back to prosecutors. Makhmudov and Gaitukayev — uncle of the Makhmudov brothers — were detained earlier.

The Investigative Committee filed new charges Friday against Khadzhikurbanov and the two Makhmudov brothers, Dzhabrail and Ibragim. Khadzhikurbanov has been in custody, while the two Chechen brothers are free but have been requested not to leave town. The committee had told the public earlier about the accusations against Gaitukayev and the others, and Friday's statements were a clear attempt to demonstrate progress in the case.

Investigators also said that Dmitry Pavlyuchenkov, who was a senior police officer at the time of the killing, is accused of tracking Politkovskaya's movements to help stage the killing. Pavlyuchenkov, who served as a witness during the abortive first trial, was arrested in August.

Politkovskaya's Novaya Gazeta newspaper has welcomed the detention of the suspected shooter and other suspects, but lamented slow progress on finding a person who ordered the killing and described Friday's step as a mere formality.

Politkovskaya's son, Ilya, criticized authorities for failing to track down the mastermind.

"Five years afterward, we only have suspects accused of staging the killing," he said, RIA-Novosti reported. "It could have been done much earlier. A lot of time has been lost."

Politkovskaya was killed on the birthday of Vladimir Putin, who was serving his second presidential term at the time, and that helped fuel speculations about possible involvement of authorities angered by Politkovskaya's exposure of atrocities in Chechnya. "She was challenging the dominant power of the government with her lonely efforts," Novaya Gazeta said on its front page, carrying a photo of Politkovskaya.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov dismissed allegations of possible government involvement in Politkovskaya's killing in remarks broadcast by Dozhd television earlier in the week.

"People, are you crazy to associate this with Putin?" he said.

On Thursday, U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said the United States welcomed the arrests of suspects but that "justice will not be done until all those involved in the crime are identified and prosecuted."

Politkovskaya's colleagues marked the anniversary of her death by opening a Facebook account [dedicated](#) to her memory, posting her pictures, books and favorite music.

(AP, Reuters)

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