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Russia Links Chechens Shot in Turkey to Bombing

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Two Chechens shot dead in Turkey last month are suspected of involvement in a January suicide bombing at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport that killed 37 people, investigators said Wednesday.

Berg-Hadj Musayev, Zaurbek Amriyev and Rustam Altemirov were shot dead on Sept. 16 in a parking lot in Istanbul, in a killing that was blamed on Russian special services by a Turkish-based support group for refugees from the Caucasus.

The Investigative Committee said it was probing the murders of Amriyev and Altemirov as part of an investigation into the Jan. 24 suicide bombing at Domodedovo Airport.

The third Chechen, Musayev, has been closely linked to Chechen warlord Doku Umarov, according to Kavkazcenter.com, a web site affiliated with the Islamist insurgency in the North Caucasus.

Umarov has said on video that he organized the airport suicide bombing, which was carried

out by a 20-year-old man from Ingushetia.

"The murder in September 2011 in Istanbul of Zaurbek Amriyev and Rustam Altemirov, who were on an international wanted list, is being probed," investigators said in a statement on the Domodedovo bombing.

The three Chechens were shot dead by 11 bullets fired from a pistol fitted with a silencer, Turkish media reported.

While Vladimir Putin was president, 2006 amendments to federal legislation gave the president the right to order special forces to hunt down suspected "terrorists" abroad.

Putin, now prime minister but seeking a return to the presidency in March, asked for such rights after four Russian diplomats were killed in Iraq.

Russian intelligence has been implicated in a series of killings abroad in recent years, including the 2004 murder of former Chechen rebel Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev in Qatar and the 2006 poisoning of Kremlin critic Alexander Litvinenko in London.

The Foreign Intelligence Service declined to comment on the killings in Turkey. The powerful foreign military intelligence directorate, known as GRU, is so secretive it does not have a spokesman.

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