

MI5 Warns Of Zakayev Murder Plot

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The  Moscow Times

British intelligence agency MI5 issued a public warning that exiled Chechen rebel envoy Akhmed Zakayev is the target of a murder plot, a British newspaper reported.

According to documents seen by The Telegraph, MI5 says Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov ordered Zakayev's death through a London-based middleman, known only as "E1."

"Kadyrov, who had been responsible for the assassination of a number of his opponents, has a blacklist of individuals, some of whom he wished to have assassinated, and ... the exiled prime minister of Chechnya, Akhmed Zakayev, a refugee living in the U.K., was believed to be on this list," the report said Saturday, citing a written decision by judges in a case related to the extradition of the suspected middleman.

Acting on advice from MI5, Britain's top police official sought to expel "E1" in 2010 and said he is a threat to national security, but judges have allowed him to remain in the country.

The identity of E1 has not been disclosed, though some details were revealed. He is a 45-year-

old Russian father of six and believed to be a former Chechen soldier. He came to Britain in 2003 with his family and claimed political asylum from the civil war in Chechnya. His family members were allowed to become British citizens in 2009, but E1 was denied citizenship.

Kadyrov's spokesman on Sunday dismissed the report and suggested that someone in London was trying to stir up "anti-Russia hysteria," Interfax reported.

MI5 said E1 was also involved in the killing of Kadyrov's former bodyguard Umar Israilov, who became a sharp critic of the Chechen leader and was killed in Vienna in 2009, according to The Telegraph.

Zakayev has long been sought by the Russian authorities and is a member of the unrecognized secessionist Chechen government. In 2001, Zakayev was put on a federal and international wanted list, accused of terrorism and murder. Russia demanded Zakayev's extradition in 2003, but a British judge refused, saying he was at risk of torture. In late February, Zakayev was implicated during an investigation of the murder of journalist Anna Politkovskaya.

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