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Former Cops Kidnap and Murder Austrian Lawyer

By The Moscow Times

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Police detaining Molchanov and Vlasov for the murder of Austrian lawyer Erich Rebasso on the Moscow Ring Road.

Two former police officers kidnapped and murdered a well-known Austrian lawyer in what Russian law enforcement agencies believe could be a contract killing.

Erich Rebasso, 48, a Vienna-based business lawyer who was accused in 2007 of heading a pyramid scheme that allegedly cost organized crime bosses large sums, went missing in the Austrian capital in late July, Kommersant reported Saturday.

Rebasso's family was later given a ransom demand for 435,000 euros ($535,000), but Austrian police unearthed the lawyer's body in a forest outside Vienna before the money was paid, the report said.

On Aug. 14, Russian police detained Alexander Molchanov and Pavel Vlasov, both in their 30s,

in connection with the murder, while the pair were traveling on the Moscow Ring Road.

The pair, who confessed to killing Rebasso, said they killed him by accident while they were trying to abduct him. Police tracked them down after traces of the lawyer's blood were found in an Austrian rental car they had hired.

According to Kommersant, Molchanov and Vlasov were expelled from the Kirov city police department for heroin dealing and fraud, respectively, and resumed their criminal activity after serving prison sentences.

Molchanov and Vlasov will answer murder charges in Russia, as the country's legislation doesn't allow Russian citizens to be extradited. The charges carry a maximum sentence of 15 years imprisonment.

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