

Investigators Wrap Up Politkovskaya Case

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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People rallying in Moscow while holding portraits of Politkovskaya on Oct. 7, the sixth anniversary of her murder. **Alexander Zemlianichenko**

Investigators announced Tuesday that they have wrapped up a second inquiry into the murder of journalist Anna Politkovskaya and charged five suspects with murder and illegal possession of weapons.

"The investigative team has collected enough evidence to draw up an indictment," Vladimir Markin, the official spokesman for the Investigative Committee, said in a [video](#) published on the committee's website.

A lawyer for Politkovskaya's family, Anna Stavitskaya, said she doubted that the case would go to court any time soon, predicting that it would take at least six months for the trial to start, Ekho Moskvy radio reported.

Politkovskaya, a Kremlin critic who wrote for Novaya Gazeta and exposed corruption and human rights abuses in Chechnya, was gunned down on Oct. 7, 2006, inside the elevator in her apartment building in central Moscow.

The five suspects in her death are the brothers Rustam, Ibragim and Dzhabrail Makhmudov, Sergei Khadzhikurbanov and Lom-Ali Gaitukayev.

Investigators believe that Gaitukayev, acting under orders of an unidentified mastermind, organized a group in 2006 that included the other suspects and former police officer Dmitry Pavlyuchenkov, who has testified against the suspects and will be tried at a separate trial. After the group was formed, the suspects obtained weapons, received the address for Politkovskaya's apartment building from Pavlyuchenkov, and prepared for the killing under the supervision of Khadzhikurbanov, the Investigative Committee said in a statement.

Here's what happened on Oct. 7, 2006, according to investigators: Ibrahim Makhmudov saw Politkovskaya driving home on that Saturday afternoon and reported her movements to his brother Dzhabrail, who in turn relayed the information to Rustam, who entered Politkovskaya's apartment building and waited for her to arrive. When Politkovskaya got into the elevator, Rustam Makhmudov shot at her several times with a pistol, which he abandoned at the scene, and then fled.

The motive for the killing remains unknown.

Alexei Mikhalechik, a lawyer for one of the suspects, said they would seek a jury. "Of course, we will submit a motion that the case is to be considered in a jury trial," Mikhalechik said, Interfax reported.

The defense apparently hopes that a jury will be more lenient to the suspects after a jury acquitted all defendants in an earlier trial in the Moscow district military court. The Supreme Court overturned that acquittal and ordered a new investigation and trial.

Politkovskaya's relatives said Tuesday that the investigation was far from over, noting that none of the suspects was the mastermind.

"These are not all of the suspects, and it is too early to speak of the investigation's completion," Politkovskaya's son Ilya said, according to Interfax.

He said his family was disappointed by the lack of progress in establishing the identity of the mastermind. At the same time, he welcomed the idea of a jury trial.

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