

Investigators Wrap Up Case Against Policeman in Politkovskaya Murder

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Investigators wrapped up a criminal case against a former police officer suspected of being involved in the murder of prominent Novaya Gazeta reporter Anna Politkovskaya, amid criticism from her family over authorities' handling of the case.

Dmitry Pavlyuchenkov, who has testified against five other suspects in the case, will be tried at a separate trial if the Prosecutor General's Office approves the charges and sends the case to court.

Politkovskaya was slain in her apartment building in October 2006 after a career in which she criticized authorities over human rights abuses in the North Caucasus.

According to investigators, another suspect, Lom-Ali Gaitukayev, organized Politkovskaya's murder by hiring a criminal gang of three Chechen brothers — Rustam, Ibragim and Dzhabrail Makhmudov — and another former police official Sergei Khadzhikurbanov.

Gaitukayev allegedly received his orders from an unidentified mastermind, while Pavlyuchenkov is supposed to have supplied the gang with Politkovskaya's home address.

Pavlyuchenkov, who was previously questioned as a witness in the case, agreed on a plea bargain with investigators and faces a reduced sentence if convicted.

Anna Stavitskaya, a lawyer representing the family of the murdered journalist, said that prosecutors might refuse to examine the case against Pavlyuchenkov.

"We have submitted a petition to terminate the [plea] bargain and want it to be approved," Stavitskaya told Interfax.

Politkovskaya's family insists that Pavlyuchenkov hasn't named the mastermind of the crime and thus should not get special treatment.

"If he does not accept our request, we will have the opportunity to raise the question in court," Stavitskaya added.

Last week, investigators wrapped up the case against five other suspects in Politkovskaya's murder. They have been charged with murder and illegal possession of weapons, which carry maximum sentences of life imprisonment and eight years' jail time, respectively.

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