

Russia to Help Probe Arafat's Death

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Yasser Arafat led Palestinians' campaign to create a state through years of war and peace.

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Russia will join an international investigation to determine whether the first Palestinian president, Yasser Arafat, was murdered, said the current Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas.

French and Swiss experts will exhume Arafat's body in Ramallah later this month in an attempt to discover how he died after an Al-Jazeera documentary in July suggested that he was killed by a rare radioactive poison.

"There's full cooperation these days between us and the French investigators and Swiss experts, and also from the Russian government," Abbas told a rain-drenched ceremony Sunday on the eighth anniversary of the death in France of the former guerrilla who led Palestinians' campaign to create a state through years of war and peace.

Abbas asked Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov for Moscow's help during talks in Jordan last week, Palestinian sources said.

Allegations of foul play have long surrounded the demise of Arafat.

The case returned to the headlines in July when a Swiss institute said it had discovered high levels of the radioactive element polonium-210 on Arafat's clothing supplied by his widow, Suha, who called for the exhumation of her husband's body.

Polonium is the radioactive substance found to have killed former Federal Security Service officer Alexander Litvinenko in London in 2006.

Three French forensic experts are expected to visit Arafat's limestone sepulcher in the West Bank capital of Ramallah on Nov. 20, and investigating magistrates plan to visit four days later, a diplomatic source said.

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