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Report: Religious Infanticide in Southern Moscow

By The Moscow Times

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A man who killed his son, daughter and their grandmother, then crossed the arms of their dead bodies and placed icons on their chests in their apartment Monday was likely a "religious fanatic," an Interfax report said, citing the Investigative Committee.

"According to preliminary information, the man did not work and had recently become fascinated with religion. His wife came home in the evening and found the bodies of the grandmother, 6-year-old daughter and 9-year-old son," Investigative Committee spokesman Sergei Stukalov told the news agency.

"Their throats had been slashed and their arms folded in a cross shape. Icons were lying on their chests," the official said.

The husband greeted his wife with the words "they're already in heaven" and, proposing that she join them, lunged at her throat with a knife, Stukalov said, adding that the woman

escaped and got help.

Neighbors called police, and a patrol unit arrived on the scene and detained the husband at the building's entrance on Biryulevskaya Ulitsa in southern Moscow, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

A RIA-Novosti report on Tuesday said neighbors told investigators that the family had fallen into debt trying to put together funds for an undisclosed medical treatment for the father.

A criminal case has been opened on charges of homicide and attempted homicide. If convicted, the husband could face life imprisonment. Initial reports conflicted on whether the grandmother was the husband's or wife's mother.

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