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4 Islamists Who Attempted to Bomb Sapsan Sentenced

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The four suspects were accused of planning to plant a bomb on the Sapsan's rail tracks just north of Moscow. The Sapsan carries up to 600 passengers between the country's most important cities.

The Moscow City Court on Monday handed down long prison sentences to four Muslim extremists who plotted to blow up the Sapsan high-speed train between Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Islam Khamzhuyev, Falya Nevlyutov, Mansur Umayev and Mansur Edilbiyev were found guilty of attempting a terrorist act, "banditism" and illegal possession of explosives. They were sentenced to between 15 and 18 years in prison colonies, news agencies reported.

Prosecutors said all four are members of the Caucasus Emirate, an Islamist terrorist group that authorities blame for most recent terrorist attacks in the North Caucasus and other parts of Russia.

The suspects were convicted of planning to plant a bomb on the Sapsan's tracks just north of Moscow. The bomb would have exploded underneath the train, which carries up to 600

passengers between the country's two most important cities.

The plot was apparently foiled by the Federal Security Service last summer, when FSB officers uncovered the group's explosives in a Moscow park. However, the intelligence agency has offered little information, and the story was only reported through media leaks.

In July 2011, FSB director Alexander Bortnikov said merely that a large terrorist attack in the Moscow area had been foiled and that four suspects had been detained.

Monday's trial was closed to the public, and the judge did not offer any explanation for the verdict, the reports said.

The sentences were only slightly less than the 16 to 19 years demanded by prosecutors, the Rapsi legal news agency reported.

According to prosecutors, Khamzhuyev was the group's mastermind. A native of Kabardino-Balkaria, whose name had been spelled Khamuzhev in earlier reports, he was assigned to the mission by North Caucasus militants and recruited the others in mosques in the capital, Maria Gridneva, the prosecutor general's spokeswoman, told Interfax.

The defendants' lawyers said Monday that they would file a complaint against the ruling.

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