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Rossia-1's 'Berezovsky' Prompts Investigation

By The Moscow Times

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A documentary-style film called "Berezovsky" aired on state-owned channel Rossia-1 on Sunday night has prompted Prosecutor General Yury Chaika to order a probe into a range of serious allegations made against former Kremlin insider Boris Berezovsky, from ordering the murder of a liberal opposition leader to abducting a Ukrainian presidential candidate, news reports said Monday.

The film, authored by Andrei Kondrashev, a host on the Vesti news program, consisted of solemn interviews with Berezovsky's former colleagues, all of whom came forward to accuse the tycoon of being involved in several high-profile crimes.

The allegations are already being checked by the Investigative Committee, the state-run RIA-Novosti news agency reported.

In one interview, Mikhail Kodanyev, a former co-chair of the Liberal Russia party who was

sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment in 2004 for ordering the killing of fellow party member Sergei Yushenkov in the mid-2000s, told Rossia-1 that he never committed the crime but kept silent all these years because Berezovsky promised to pay him $3 million to do so.

Berezovsky's motive, he says, was to secure refugee status for himself in Britain as a victim of political repression.

Kodanyev made his revelations for the first time from a prison colony, and the film also showed his written testimony asking prosecutors for a retrial of his case.

The film also accused Berezovsky of being behind the killing of Alexander Litvinenko, a former KGB officer who worked for Berezovsky and whose poisoning in London in 2006 seriously strained relations between Russia and Britain.

That accusation in the film came from Alexander Korzhakov, a former bodyguard of Boris Yeltsin.

Among the other crimes mentioned in the film in which Berezovsky was alleged to have played a role: the murders of journalist Vlad Listyev, businessman Badri Patarkatsishvili and politician Vladimir Golovlev, and the abduction of former Ukrainian presidential candidate Ivan Rybkin.

Berezovsky's lawyer, Andrei Borovko, rejected the claims made in the film and said the channel wanted to present the self-exiled oligarch as a "monster."

"If somebody wants to open another criminal case, let them open it," he told Izvestia on Monday.

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