

Burial of Boston Bombing Suspect Appears Legal

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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An employee of a Virginia burial ground removing flowers from one of two new graves at Tsarnaev's burial site. **Luis M. Alvarez**

DOSWELL, Virginia — The burial of Boston Marathon bombing suspect Tamerlan Tsarnaev appears to be legal, a law enforcement official said after examining the paperwork needed to move the corpse to the Virginia site where he was quietly interred.

The news that Tsarnaev had been buried Thursday in a rural Islamic cemetery in Virginia, hundreds of miles from his Massachusetts home, shocked some in the southern community, including officials who said they had not been informed.

But Caroline County Sheriff Tony Lipa said late Saturday that officials had looked over the paperwork and the interment appeared legal. He warned, however, that his small department lacked the money and personnel to provide round-the-clock stakeouts at the cemetery as deputies did Friday night, which passed without incident.

"The Sheriff's Office will offer the same amount of protection — no more and no less — to this site as any other cemetery in Caroline County," Lippa said in a press release.

The body of Tsarnaev, a 26-year-old ethnic Chechen from Russia, had remained at a Massachusetts funeral parlor since he was killed April 19 in a gunfight with police, days after the bombings that killed three and injured more than 260. Cemeteries in several states refused to accept the remains. With costs to protect the funeral home mounting, police appealed for help finding a place to bury him.

The woman whose actions led to Tsarnaev being buried in Virginia said the anger from local officials, some cemetery neighbors and online critics has been unpleasant, but she has no regrets.

"I can't pretend it's not difficult to be reviled and maligned," Martha Mullen said in a telephone interview Friday. "But any time you can reach across the divide and work with people that are not like you, that's what God calls us to do."

Mullen said she was at a Starbucks when she heard a radio news report about the difficulty finding a burial spot for Tsarnaev.

"My first thought was Jesus said love your enemies," she said.

Then she had an epiphany.

"I thought someone ought to do something about this — and I am someone," Mullen said.

So Mullen, a mental health counselor in private practice and a seminary graduate, sent emails to various faith organizations to see what could be done. She heard back from Islamic Funeral Services of Virginia, which arranged for a funeral plot at the Al-Barzakh cemetery. "It was an interfaith effort," she said.

Mullen, a member of the United Methodist Church, said she was motivated by her own faith and that she had the full support of her pastor.

"Nobody is without sin," she said. "Certainly this was a horrific act, but he's dead and what happened is between him and God. We just need to bury his body and move forward. People were making an issue and detracting from the healing that needed to take place."

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