

U.K. Coroner Calls for Public Inquiry Into Litvinenko Murder

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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LONDON — The coroner tasked with overseeing an inquest into the murder of former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko called for the British government to hold a public inquiry into the death after he concluded evidence would be kept secret from his own hearing.

Litvinenko, 43, died after drinking polonium-210, a radioactive isotope, that had been slipped into his tea at a London hotel in 2006. In a deathbed statement, he accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of ordering his murder, an allegation Russia has denied.

Robert Owen, a senior judge acting as coroner, concluded last month that some crucial evidence would be kept secret from the pending inquest at the request of the British government. This, he said, would render its verdict potentially misleading or unfair.

Previous pre-inquest hearings were told the British government possessed information that established "a prima facie case" that the Russian state was behind the killing.

(Reuters)

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