

'Belgorod Shooter' Given Life Sentence

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Sergei Pomazun in the dock during his sentencing.

A Belgorod court ruled in the case of the "Belgorod shooter" Friday, finding Sergei Pomazun guilty of killing six people in a shooting rampage in April and sentencing him to life in prison.

The court also ordered Pomazun to pay 3 million rubles (\$100,000) to the widow and children of one of his victims, RIA Novosti reported.

The court found that on April 22 Pomazun killed three people in a weapons store in Belgorod, a city 65 kilometers north of the Ukrainian border, before storming into the street and opening fire again, killing three more people, including two teenage girls.

Pomazun was arrested the following day while attempting to take a train out of the city, and he wounded a police officer with a knife during the scuffle that led to his arrest. When police managed to restrain him, he shouted that he hadn't shot at children but had "fired at hell."

Pomazun, 31, was visibly agitated when the court announced the verdict and threatened

journalists who were taking photographs of him, Itar-Tass reported.

The state prosecutor had requested life imprisonment for Pomazun and said he regretted that he could not ask for the death penalty. Pomazun's lawyer Viktor Yeremeyev had asked for a 25-year jail sentence in light of the defendant's mental state.

A psychiatric examination found Pomazun fit to stand trial, though the defense said his statements were similar to those made by people with schizophrenia.

Pomazun claimed that he had been a counter-terrorism sniper in the Second Chechen War, despite there being no record of his service. He was removed from the courtroom multiple times during hearings in July after screaming obscenities at the judge and at a minor-age girl on the witness stand.

Yeremeyev said they would appeal the court's decision and ask for another psychological evaluation.

During the sentencing, the judge emphasized that the defendant fully admitted his guilt and was a repeat offender.

Pomazun most recently served a four-year term for robbery that ended in 2012. On Friday, he was also found guilty of illegal weapons possession, taking weapons by force and assaulting a police officer.

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