

Ingushetia Security Council Head Shot Dead

August 27, 2013



The car in which Kotiyev was shot.

A high-ranking security official in Ingushetia died in a hospital Tuesday shortly after being shot multiple times in his car by unknown assailants, an attack the republic's head alleged was motivated by the official's work reforming militants.

Akhmed Kotiyev, who as head of the republic's security council worked with former rebels in an effort to re-assimilate them into the community, was shot near the village of Nizhniye Achaluki while on his way to the republic's capital Magas early in the morning. His driver — a police officer — was also shot and died at the scene.

“This crime is connected to the professional activity of Kotiyev, who was active in working with former members of illegal armed groups. Today's attack was likely related to his brave work,” said acting head of the republic of Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, according to Interfax.

He added that the killing came just a few days before six militants were expected to lay down arms and surrender to authorities.

Ingushetia, like its neighbors Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria, has been stricken by a violent insurgency of radical Islamists for years, with attacks on security forces, police and civilians reported regularly. Many militants in the North Caucasus say they are fighting for an Islamic state, while rights activists say the insurgency is fueled by poverty and anger at the tactics of security forces.

In 2009, Yevkurov himself was badly injured when a suicide bomber detonated a car packed with explosives next to his motorcade.

“For me, Kotiyev is an example of honesty and fairness. Finding the criminals involved in the shooting will be a matter of honor for us,” Yevkurov said.

The Investigative Committee has sent officers to Ingushetia from Moscow to help local authorities catch the perpetrators, who fled the scene of the shooting.

An unidentified Ingushetia police official told Itar-Tass that the assassination was likely organized by Artur Getagazhev, the leader of one of several armed groups allegedly involved in organizing a terror attack in the town of Malgobek last year and in a number of attempts to kill law enforcement officers.

The local investigative committee did not confirm the information about Getagazhev's alleged involvement in Tuesday's deadly attack.

Federal investigators agreed with Yevkurov's allegations regarding the motive behind the killing of Kotiyev, saying in a statement that his work as a public servant was most likely the reason for the attack.

Yevkurov said Kotiyev's work was very successful, citing the fact that since 2011, when Kotiyev assumed his job on the security council, he had helped more than 50 militants leave illegal armed groups.

“When the leaders of the armed groups found out that not one or two people are giving in, but whole groups wanted to lay down arms, they decided to prevent that, and I think they issued an order to kill him,” Yevkurov said.

According to media reports, Kotiyev was constantly intimidated, and about a year ago there was a failed attempt to assassinate him when an unknown attacker launched a grenade into Kotiyev's house in Malgobek. The house was damaged, but Kotiyev was left unharmed.

Ingushetia's prime minister, Musa Chilyev, told pro-Kremlin news outlet LifeNews that Kotiyev's assassination was intended to destabilize the situation in the republic.

“Two important events were scheduled for today in the republic: the launching of a national TV channel and a meeting of Russian filmmakers. Everything was made so that the crime was much-publicized,” Chilyev said.

Contact the author at e.kravtsova@imedia.ru

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