

Potential Suicide Bomber Reported in Sochi

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Two men claiming to be behind December's deadly Volgograd bombing.

After an Islamic extremist group promised to deliver a deadly “present” to visitors of the upcoming Sochi Winter Olympics, law enforcement authorities have said a potential suicide bomber had traveled to Sochi from Dagestan.

Ruzana Ibragimova, also known as Salima, is reportedly “the widow of a neutralized member of the insurgency who can be used by its leaders to organize terrorist acts during the 2014 Winter Games as a suicide bomber,” according to the local news site Blogsochi.ru.

Security has been one of the primary concerns surrounding the games, with the opening ceremony to be held on Feb. 7 a mere 600 kilometers from the republic of Dagestan, considered by experts as the most dangerous place in Europe.

Alexander Valov, the head of Blogsochi.ru, said by phone from Sochi that the information was

leaked to him by three different sources, two from law enforcement officials and one from Sochi's city hall.

A representative of the Krasnodar regional Federal Security Service branch could neither confirm nor deny the information.

According to Valov's source in the FSB, the suspect had already been spotted on Sovetskaya Ulitsa in central Sochi, which is in the vicinity of the Foreign Affairs Ministry's Sochi office and Sochi city hall.

It was unclear whether Ibragimova was carrying any explosives with her. It was also not immediately clear how a suspected terrorist — who was apparently interrogated by law enforcement officials in the past — could get into Russia's Olympic capital amid heightened security.

Valov published a copy of an official letter sent by the local FSB to the Krasnodar Anti-Extremism Center, asking them to chase the suspect, who arrived in Sochi on Jan. 10 or 11. The letter describes Ibragimova as someone who “limps slightly, her elbow does not bend and she has a 10-centimeter long scar on her left cheek.”

Valov said police were trying to keep the information under wraps.

“The police are afraid of causing panic by making this information public,” Valov said, before being interrupted by an Investigative Committee representative who had arrived to present him with an official summons for questioning.

Valov went on after the investigator left: “Some people said that this might be another anti-terrorist drill, but the documents are real and describe real people.”

A journalist working for a major Western newspaper said that he had also seen a notice about Ibragimova at the reception desk of a Sochi hotel. According to Valov, the same document was sent out to all checkpoints guarding the Olympic security zone of Sochi.

The news comes one day after a video posted on the website of the radical group Vilayat Dagestan showed two men claiming responsibility for the Volgograd bombings last month and promising to deliver more acts of terror during the Olympics.

Vilayat Dagestan represents the Dagestan “province” of the Caucasus Emirate, a self-proclaimed entity that aims to establish a strict Islamic state in Russia's North Caucasus. The organization, which seeks to include Sochi within the proposed Vilayat Cherkessia province, is headed by Doku Umarov, an Islamist militant who has been repeatedly declared dead by Caucasus authorities only to reappear time and time again.

President Vladimir Putin said Sunday that about 40,000 law enforcement and special services officers had been deployed to provide security in the Sochi area.

Putin told six Russian and foreign journalists that: “We are doing everything with an understanding, with a clear understanding of the operational situation developing around Sochi and in the region as a whole; we have a perfect understanding of what it is, what the threat is, how to stop it, how to combat it.”

Olympic torch has arrived in Volgograd on Monday, the southern city that was the scene of three suicide bombings in the past months killing 41 people. The torch has traveled around the city with the resulting route of 45 kilometers setting a record for Russian cities. According to local residents the blocked roads in the city have led to severe traffic jams.

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