

Prosecutors Want 18 Years for Biryulyovo Murder Suspect

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Orkhan Zeinalov

Prosecutors have requested an 18-year prison sentence against an accused killer whose alleged crime sparked ethnic riots last fall in southern Moscow.

Azerbaijani national Orkhan Zeinalov stands accused of having stabbed Muscovite Yegor Shcherbakov to death following a verbal altercation on Oct. 10, 2013.

Zeinalov presently maintains his innocence, though he initially pleaded guilty in part.

The state prosecutor on Monday said Zeinalov's guilt had been proven without a doubt. "He cynically and cold-bloodedly killed Shcherbakov," the prosecutor, whose name was not disclosed, said in comments carried by ITAR-Tass.

Prosecutors have also asked the court to order Zeinalov to pay out 5 million rubles (\$142,000) in damages to the victim's father.

Shcherbakov's death launched a wave of nationalist sentiment in Moscow's southern

Biryulyovo district, where the crime was carried out. Residents reacted to the killing with outrage, storming a local shopping center where many migrant workers were known to be employed and demanding the closure of the vegetable warehouse where Zeinalov had worked.

Zeinalov initially fled the city, but was apprehended days later in the Moscow region city of Kolomna, after his roommate identified him in a surveillance video of the altercation with Shcherbakov.

The court is expected to deliver its verdict on July 28.

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