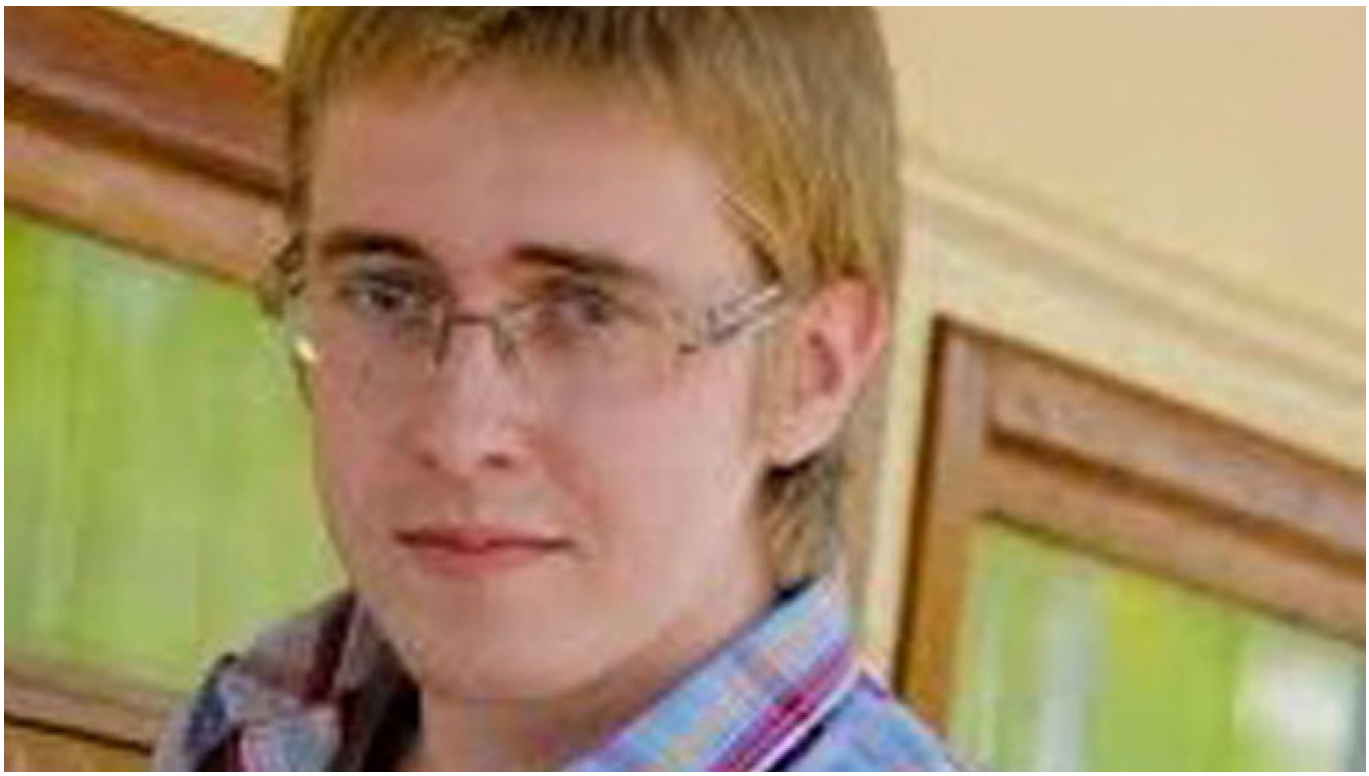
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Ultranationalist Gang Leader Convicted of Multiple Murders

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The leader of an ultranationalist Russian gang was found guilty Tuesday of five murders, organizing an armed extremist group and weapons possession, the Kommersant newspaper reported.

According to prosecutors, Ilya Goryachev and his accomplice Nikita Tikhonov — a convicted murderer who has already been sentenced to life in prison — founded BORN (a Russian acronym for "militant organization of Russian nationalists"), a violent extremist group that targeted ethnic minorities.

Goryachev saw BORN as an instrument to help him promote the other nationalist organization he headed, Russky Obraz ("Russian Image"), in the political sphere, Kommersant reported.

He ordered his associates to kill those that ran counter to his far-right cause.

One of his more high-profile victims, prosecutors alleged, were human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov, whose brazen 2009 murder alongside Novaya Gazeta newspaper reporter

Anastasia Baburova in the center of Moscow made international headlines.

Goryachev denied the accusations, but to no avail. On Tuesday the jury handed him a guilty verdict.

He faces life in prison. The date of his sentencing hearing has not yet been announced. Prosecutors are expected to announce their preferred sentence in court Wednesday.

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