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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Nalchik Attack Convict Dies in Russian Jail Following Hunger Strike

By Shura Collinson

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The man had been on hunger strike in protest against being kept at a detention center rather than a prison colony.

A man convicted of taking part in a massive terror attack in southern Russia 10 years ago died in a detention center Friday after a lengthy hunger strike, RIA Novosti cited his lawyer as saying.

"I was informed this morning that Kaziyev died in the detention center. Not long before, he had ended a hunger strike that lasted for several months," Yelizaveta Shak was cited as saying.

Sergei Kaziyev was sentenced in December last year to 14-and-a-half years in jail for involvement in a large-scale coordinated attack on law enforcement agencies in October 2005 in Nalchik, the regional capital of Russia's Kabardino-Balkaria republic, that left more than 100 people dead.

Kaziyev had declared a hunger strike in May in protest against being kept in a pre-trial detention center in Nalchik even after he was sentenced, insisting he should be moved to a prison colony to start serving his punishment, regional news website Kavkazsky Uzel (Caucasian Knot) reported Friday.

He had lost half of his body weight by the beginning of this month, the website cited his mother, Alexandra Kaziyeva, as saying.

The attack on Nalchik was carried out by militants led by Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev and continued for two days from Oct. 13 to 14, 2005. At least 250 people were involved in carrying out simultaneous assaults on buildings belonging to police, security services and other law enforcement agencies, as well as the airport, according to Kavkazsky Uzel.

Thirty-five security services officers and 15 civilians were killed in the attack, and another 129 security officers and 66 civilians were injured, the report said.

The official investigation found that the militants' aim was the establishment of an Islamic state in Russia's North Caucasus region, though rights activists and locals said the situation had been brought about by police lawlessness and abuse of power.

Ninety-five of the militants were killed during the assault, and in addition to Kaziyev, fifty-six other people were later convicted over the attacks after an investigation and trial that Amnesty International and other human rights organizations said was flawed.

☒ A convict died this week in a prison colony in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg, Ura.ru regional news website reported Friday.

The 54-year-old man, identified only by his surname, Kuznetsov, had been diagnosed with cancer last year and should have been released, his lawyer Alexei Bushmakov was quoted as saying.

The prisoner was sentenced to death by firing squad in St. Petersburg back in 1994 for killing two people, Ura.ru reported. His sentence was then commuted to 25 years in jail, of which he had served 21, his lawyer was cited as saying.

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