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Investigators Say Moscow Cemetery Brawl Was Financially Motivated

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Russian investigators believe that financial motives were behind the deadly altercation in Moscow's Khovanskoye Cemetery on Saturday, Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin said in a statement published Monday.

Several hundred people were involved in a brawl and shooting at the main entrance to Khovanskoye Cemetery in Moscow on May 14. Three people died at the scene and more than 30 suffered injuries of varying severity. All victims were hospitalized — three people remain in intensive care, according to Markin's statement.

The investigation seeks to detain the 14 persons currently suspected of committing the violent crimes — including cemetery director Yury Chabuyev, Markin said.

Those detained are suspected of committing crimes under the Criminal Code: the murder of two or more people, the illegal purchase and carrying of firearms, and mass hooliganism.

Investigators have gathered one non-combat Kalashnikov, two traumatic pistols and over 300 objects of interest from the crime scene. Over 100 interviews have been carried out. The

Investigative Committee has assigned 40 investigators and 12 forensic experts to this case.

Part of the criminal investigation will be a legal assessment of the financial activities of Ritual, the government agency with a monopoly on cremations and burial services, the official statement said.

There will also be an evaluation of officials' activities, including those within law enforcement, which may have contributed to the cemetery altercation.

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