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Alleged Killers of Boris Nemtsov Ask for Jury Trial

By The Moscow Times

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The five alleged killers of opposition politician Boris Nemtsov have ⊠asked to stand trial in front of a jury, the RBC news website reported ⊠Monday.⊠

The preliminary hearing for the case took place behind closed doors in ⊠the Moscow District Military Court on Monday. All five of the accused ⊠pleaded not guilty and requested a jury trial, Shamsudin Tsakayev, one ⊠of the group's lawyers, told RBC.

The court hasn't yet ruled on the ⊠motion, spokesperson Irina Zhirnova told the state-run RIA Novosti news ⊠agency. ⊠⊠The high-profile trial began Monday amid heightened security, with ⊠several police buses and riot squads stationed near the court, RBC ⊠reported. Only lawyers were allowed to enter the building, with ⊠journalists and Nemtsov supporters asked to stay outside.

Nemtsov, a former Prime Minister under Boris Yeltsin in the 1990s, was ⊠gunned down in a

night time hit-and-run attack while crossing Moscow’s ⊠Bolshoi Moskvoretsky Bridge in February last year. Five Chechen men had ⊠been charged over the murder.

The men — Zaur Dadayev, Anzor Gubashev, Shadid Gubashev, Temerlan ⊠Eskerkhanov and Khamzat Bakhayev — are accused of committing the murder ⊠as part of an organized group and illegally purchasing, carrying, ⊠transporting and storing firearms. A sixth suspect, Beslan Shavanov, ⊠killed himself while being detained in Chechnya last year.

Russia's Investigative Committee said in January that it was continuing ⊠to investigate the man alleged to have ordered the hit, Ruslan ⊠Mukhidinov. Mukhidinov, a 27-year-old former officer of a Chechen police⊠ battalion, is currently on the run with an international warrant in ⊠circulation for his arrest. Nemtsov's lawyer Vadim Prokhorov has ⊠questioned Mukhidinov's alleged role in the crime, claiming that the ⊠real culprit was likely to be higher up in Russia's power structure.

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