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Dubrovka Hostage Survivors to Sue Government Over Fatal Raid

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Khasan Zakaev **TASS**

A Moscow military court sentenced Khasan Zakaev to 19 years in prison March 20 for his role in the 2002 Moscow hostage crisis at the Dubrovka musical theater that resulted in the deaths of 130.

Family members of the victims and survivors of the hostage crisis blame government officials for poor management of the hostage negotiations and say that government officials who order the assault on the theater be prosecuted.

The European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2011 that Russian authorities did not provide sufficient medical aid to hostages after Russian special forces used an unknown gas as part of the assault.

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“Khasan Zakaev is not the only person we wanted to see in the dock,” said Karina Moskalenko, a lawyer and representative of the victims. “We are talking about the responsibility of government officials.”

Victims of the hostage crisis are planning to submit the case against the government officials to the Supreme Court.

“We are interested in everyone who is responsible for the so-called rescue operation,” Moskalenko said.

In October 2002, a group of Chechen terrorists took more than 900 people hostage at the sold-out performance in Dubrovka musical theater. The attackers, claiming allegiance to the Chechen separatist movement, demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya.

On the fourth day of the siege, after the execution of two female hostages, Russian special forces dispersed an undisclosed anaesthetic into the theater and stormed the building.

More than 700 people were injured by the chemical, and 130 hostages died, allegedly due to gas poisoning.

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