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Former Russian Parliamentarian and Putin Critic Shot Dead in Kiev

March 23, 2017



Denis Voronenkov **Anna Isakova / TASS**

WARNING: Graphic content below

A former Russian parliamentarian who fled to Ukraine and harshly criticized the Russian authorities has been shot dead in Kiev.

Denis Voronenkov, formerly a Communist Party lawmaker in the State Duma, was killed outside Kiev's Premier Palace hotel March 23, according to multiple sources. Kiev Police Chief Andrei Krishchenko said the murder was likely a contract killing, the Meduza news site reported.

According to Meduza, Voronenkov was leaving the hotel with his bodyguard when he was shot. The bodyguard returned fire and wounded the shooter. The alleged assassin was subsequently taken to a Kiev hospital. The bodyguard also sustained injuries in the shootout.

Embed:

Ilya Ponomaryov, another former Russian lawmaker and Kremlin critic living in exile in Kiev, wrote on Facebook that Voronenkov was killed at 11:25 a.m. while heading to a meeting with him.

Voronenkov was "an investigator who was deadly dangerous for the [Russian] security agencies," Ponomaryov wrote.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko called the killing an "act of terrorism by Russia" that displayed the "signature of the Russian special services, as repeatedly seen in different European capitals."

Voronenkov served in the State Duma until October 2016, when he lost his seat in parliamentary elections. Having lost parliamentary immunity, he fled a corruption investigation, escaping to Kiev with his wife, former United Russia lawmaker Maria Maksakova.

In December 2016, Voronenkov received Ukrainian citizenship. The next month, he testified against ousted former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych before the country's Prosecutor General.

In February, Russia launched large-scale fraud charges against the former parliamentarian after he gave a provocative interview to the Ukrainian media outlet Censor.net.ua.

During the interview, he said that Russia was in the grip of a "pseudo-patriotic frenzy" similar to Nazi Germany, and claimed that it was a "mistake" for Russia to annex the Crimean peninsula.

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