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Fear of Flying Prevents Russian Mob Boss Extradition from Austria

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Interpol

A Russian mob boss with scores of murders on his rap sheet cannot be extradited from Austria, reportedly because of his newly discovered fear of flying.

Aslan Gagiev's gang is accused of carrying out 60 murders in Moscow and the North Caucasus. An Austrian court has approved Gagiev's extradition to Russia three times since his arrest in 2015.

Investigators claim Gagiev launched his criminal career in 2004 and gained notoriety for the murders of law enforcement officials and public figures.

The latest extradition attempt was foiled as Gagiev was on his way to Vienna airport after his lawyers presented documentation claiming that one of Russia's most wanted criminals might not be able to survive the flight due to a newly contracted and severe fear of flying, the Kommersant business daily reported Monday.

Related article: Austria Approves Extradition of Russian Mob Boss Gagiev

His defence team has reportedly appealed the extradition approval and vowed to take the fight to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) if the court in Vienna sides with Moscow.

Kommersant did not disclose when the shelved extradition attempt took place, but media reports at the time indicated that Austria's supreme court granted Russia's request in September.

A source cited by Kommersant says the Investigative Committee hopes that Gagiev, also known as Dzhako, would end up in a Russian jail by late December or early January.

"This isn't about aerophobia! Dzhako simply knows that a life sentence awaits him in Russia," the source said.

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