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Moscow Turf War: 5 Sentenced for Cemetery Brawl

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Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

Five participants of a mass brawl at a Moscow cemetery last year were sentenced to three years in prison apiece, Moscow's Shcherbinsky court ruled on Monday.

Witnesses reported that more than 500 people participated in the brawl at a cemetery on the outskirts of Moscow in May 2016. Officially, it resulted in three deaths — all Tajik citizens — though as many as 20 people could have been killed, sources told The Moscow Times.

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"They committed hooligan acts with the use of weapons, including shovels, stones and other unidentified objects, and began demonstrating their superiority over the people who were there," the state-run RIA Novosti news agency cited the verdict as saying.

According to the verdict, the brawl was part of a turf war between cemetery workers. At the time, analysts attributed the fighting to financial disputes and ethnic divisions among migrant workers.

Russia's Investigative Committee is also investigating 17 people suspected of committing more serious offences during the brawl, including the organization of mass riots, manslaughter, and other felonies, RIA Novosti reported.

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