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Russia, Ukraine React to Death of Slain Journalist Arkady Babchenko

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Arkady Babchenko / Facebook

Editor's note: Since the publication of this article, Arkady Babchenko has appeared at a press conference in Kiev where he said his murder was staged as part of a sting operation to prevent an actual attempt on his life. Read more.

Arkady Babchenko, a prominent Russian investigative journalist who left the country over fears for his safety, was shot dead in Kiev late on Tuesday.

Babchenko, 41, had covered numerous conflicts in the region as a war correspondent and was highly critical of the Kremlin in recent years. He reported receiving death threats and was denounced by pro-government politicians in Russia over his comments on the Syrian and Ukrainian wars.

Related article: Russian Journalist Arkady Babchenko Shot Dead in Kiev

He died after being shot three times in the back on the doorstep of his apartment in Kiev.

Russia and Ukraine have launched separate investigations into the murder amid mutual accusations.

Russian reactions:

— Russian Foreign Ministry

“Bloody crimes and total impunity have become routine for the Kiev regime. We demand that the Ukrainian authorities make every effort to promptly investigate.”

— Vasily Nebenzya, Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

“It can be assumed that the Ukrainian authorities will blame Russia for this, as has happened before.”

— Alexei Pushkov, Federation Council Deputy

“Attempts are already being made to connect the murder of Babchenko with his opposition to the Kremlin. It really looks like another bloody provocation.”

— Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of the Kremlin-funded RT news broadcaster and Sputnik news website.

“If you fear persecution in Russia, the most foolish thing [you can do] is to flee to Kiev. It’s better to be persecuted a little here than get whacked there.”

— Mikhail Fedotov, head of the Kremlin human rights council and head of the Russian Union of Journalists.

“We know him as an experienced war correspondent with his own special vision of the world, with his very critical view of Russian politics. That’s why his murder is openly provocative.”

— Ilya Ponomaryov, Kiev-based former State Duma deputy.

“Over the last three days I heard about three hits put out on Russian opposition members among emigres [...] I’m afraid this isn’t the last death. No words.”

Ukrainian reactions:

— Volodymyr Groysman, Prime Minister of Ukraine

"I’m convinced the Russian totalitarian machine didn’t forgive his honesty and integrity. A real friend of Ukraine who told the truth about Russian aggression.”

— Anton Gerashchenko, Ukrainian deputy

“Putin’s regime targets those who cannot be broken or cowered.”

— Mikheil Saakashvili, former governor of Ukraine's Odessa region

"Poroshenko declared me a Russian agent and wasted all SBU [Ukrainian security service] resources fighting me, and so naturally they lack forces for the real agents and killers sent by Putin."

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