Russian Investigators Blame Murders of 3 Journalists in CAR on Their Employer

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Mikhail Khodorkovsky (Chatham House / Flickr / CC BY 2.0)

Russia's Investigative Committee has blamed the deaths of three Russian journalists in the Central African Republic on the media outlet they were working for.

The accusation comes a day after an investigation presented what it claimed was new evidence that the journalists fell victim to a targeted attack by men who had links to Wagner, a Russian private military contractor.

Orkhan Dzhemal, Alexander Rastorguyev and Kirill Radchenko were shot dead in late July while on assignment in the CAR for the TsUR news site to investigate the activities of Wagner, which has also been tied to the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine.

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A report into their deaths was published on Thursday by Dossier, an investigative outlet financed by Mikhail Khodorkovsky. The tycoon-turned-opposition figure previously also funded TsUR but pulled out after the CAR incident, saying the outlet was partially to blame.

In a nod to Khodorkovsky's ties to the two outlets, Russian investigators in their statement on Friday accused TsUR of attempting to "justify their own miscalculations in organizing a dangerous trip."

"[Instead, they] prefer to put forward their own versions and blame those who aren't involved," the Investigative Committee said in a statement on its website.

The Investigative Committee added it was conducting its own probe into the murder of the three journalists.⊠

Yevgeny Prigozhin, known as "Putin's Chef" for his close ties to the Kremlin is suspected of controlling the Wagner mercenary group. He also believed to be behind the infamous St. Petersburg troll farm and is on a U.S. sanctions list for election meddling.

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