

Russian Journalists in Africa Were Killed in 'Robbery,' Investigators Say

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The slain reporters' colleagues and relatives have questioned the robbery theory and reports have linked their deaths to the Wagner mercenary group. **Vladislav Shatilo / RBC / TASS**

Three Russian journalists investigating a secretive Kremlin-linked military group in the Central African Republic (CAR) were killed in a robbery attempt, a senior Russian investigator [said](#) in an interview with the Kommersant business daily Monday.

Kirill Radchenko, Alexander Rastorguyev and Orkhan Dzhemal were [shot and killed](#) on July 30, 2018, while investigating the activities of the Wagner mercenary group. Russian investigators and the Foreign Ministry have said the three men were killed while resisting a robbery attempt.

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"The established circumstances of the attack point to murder for the purpose of robbery," Igor Krasnov, deputy chief of the Investigative Committee, told Kommersant in response to a

question about complaints toward the investigation.

Krasnov said the culprits are likely “residents of CAR or neighboring countries who are systematically engaged in committing violent crimes in this region.”

The slain reporters’ colleagues and relatives have questioned the robbery theory.

Dzhemal’s ex-wife and fellow journalist Irina Gordiyenko [alleged](#) Monday that Krasnov did not provide any fresh evidence to support his claim.

“They wrote the same in a [press release](#) just over a year ago,” Gordiyenko told Interfax.

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Russia’s investigative outlet Dossier, led by exiled tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky who also funded the murdered journalists’ ill-fated CAR investigation, [linked](#) the deaths to Wagner last year.

Wagner is alleged to be run by businessman Yevgeny Prigozhin, a restaurateur with close ties to the Kremlin. Prigozhin is under U.S. sanctions for alleged election meddling.

Russian authorities deny that Wagner contractors carry out their orders.

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