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Russian Investigators Refuse to Drop Khachaturyan Sisters' Murder Charges

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The sisters admitted they killed their father after he abused them for years. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russian investigators have rejected prosecutors' orders to drop murder charges against three teenage sisters accused of killing their abusive father, Interfax reported Wednesday.

Prosecutors in January ordered investigators to drop the charges against Krestina, Angelina and Maria Khachaturyan, who admitted to killing their father in July 2018 after he subjected them to years of physical, mental and sexual abuse. The sisters' lawyers had hoped that investigators would change the charges of premeditated murder, which carry a prison sentence of up to 20 years, to necessary defense charges.

"An additional investigation did not change their qualifications," the sisters' lawyer Alexei Lipser told Interfax.

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Experts Say

Lipser said the sisters' lawyers would continue to push for the sisters' release.

"We also hope that the Prosecutor General's Office will maintain its position that the girls acted in conditions of necessary defense," he said.

The sisters' high-profile legal case has divided Russian society. Supporters blame Russia's legal system — which critics say turns a blind eye to domestic abuse — for forcing the teenagers to defend themselves, while opponents say they view them as murderers.

Their case has also fueled calls for the repeal of

a 2017 law that decriminalized first-time domestic abuse offenses.

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