

Russian Prosecutors Uphold Khachaturyan Sisters' Murder Charges

July 13, 2020



The Khachaturyan sisters' high-profile case has divided Russian society. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russian prosecutors have backtracked on their position to drop murder charges against three teenage sisters accused of killing their abusive father, lawyers told news agencies Sunday.

Prosecutors late last year [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 downgrade the charges of premeditated murder, which carry a prison sentence of up to 20 years, to necessary defense charges.

Related article: [Russian Investigators Refuse to Drop Khachaturyan Sisters' Murder Charges](#)

“The Prosecutor General’s Office has approved the Khachaturyan sisters’ indictment,” their lawyer Alexei Liptser [told](#) the state-run TASS news agency.

Liptser said the same deputy prosecutor who refused to approve the sisters' indictment in December has "obviously changed his position." In May, Russian investigators rejected the prosecutors' orders to drop the murder charges.

His colleague Mari Davtyan [linked](#) the prosecutors' reversal to "a trend" of raids and arrests of activists and journalists since Russia adopted a slew of controversial constitutional changes on July 1.

In addition to adding socially conservative and economically populist promises to the Constitution, the amendments allow President Vladimir Putin to extend his 20-year rule into 2036 by resetting sitting or former presidents' term limits.

The Khachaturyan sisters' other lawyer Alexei Parshin [told](#) the state-run RIA Novosti news agency that he expects a closed trial.

The sisters' high-profile 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 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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