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Germany Probes Russian Over Plot to Murder Chechen Dissident

By AFP

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Christoph Soeder / dpa / TASS

German prosecutors said Friday they are investigating a Russian man on suspicion that he helped to plan the murder of a Chechen dissident living in Germany on orders of the Chechen regime.

Named as Valid D., the suspect is accused of "making a declaration of readiness to commit murder, preparing a serious act of violence endangering the state and violating the weapons act," prosecutors said.

He was arrested in January and is in pre-trial detention.

Valid D. is alleged to have been instructed to bring the murder weapon and the contract killer to Germany, spy on the intended victim and act as a driver during the assassination.

He had managed to smuggle the intended hitman into Germany and obtain a firearm with a

silencer, prosecutors said.

Another Russian man went on trial in October over the murder of a former Chechen commander in a Berlin park, allegedly on Moscow's orders.

The 55-year-old named by prosecutors as Vadim Krasikov, alias Vadim Sokolov, stands accused of gunning down Georgian national 40-year-old Tornike Kavtarashvili, in Kleiner Tiergarten park on Aug. 23 last year.

The new investigation comes at a time of increasing tensions between Germany and Russia over Ukraine, the poisoning and imprisonment of opposition leader Alexei Navalny and the controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has always stressed the importance of keeping dialogue open with Russian President Vladimir Putin, but she has sharpened her tone in recent months.

Russia has for years drawn the ire of Western powers, from annexing Ukraine's Crimea to meddling in elections and backing President Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria.

Merkel last year also revealed that she was the target of "outrageous" hacking attempts by Russia.

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