The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Chechen Gets Life Term for Killing Dissident in Austria

By AFP

August 07, 2021



Chechen protesters hold a banner that reads: " Stop helping Putin to kill Chechens" outside of the Russian embassy in Vienna, Austria. **AP**

A Chechen man was handed a life sentence in Austria on Friday after being convicted of murdering a Chechen dissident, a court spokesman said.

Mamikhan Umarov, 43, who was granted political asylum in Austria in 2005 and known locally as Martin Beck, was found dead with gunshot wounds near Vienna on July 4 last year.

A former policeman in Chechnya, Umarov ran a video blog critical of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, and worked with Austrian intelligence.

His killer, who was identified only as a 48-year-old Chechen man, had the victim's blood on his left shoe and traces of gunpowder on his hands when he was arrested, according to investigators.

The defendant had pleaded not guilty at the court in Korneuburg in northeast Austria and vowed to appeal when the verdict was delivered, according to the court spokesman.

No motive for the crime was established, with prosecutors suggesting it was either an arms deal gone wrong or a political murder.

Umarov had given testimony in other murder trials involving Chechens.

Chechnya is a predominantly Muslim part of Russia. Two wars in the 1990s triggered a wave of emigration, with many Chechens heading for western Europe.

But more Chechens have fled into exile in recent years because of disagreements with pro-Kremlin Kadyrov, who activists accuse of repeated rights violations.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/08/07/chechen-gets-life-term-for-killing-dissident-in-austria-a74724