

Russia Hands Lengthy Prison Terms to Mobster's Killers

By [AFP](#)

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Criminal boss Vyacheslav Ivankov in 2005. **Yury Mashkov / TASS**

A Russian court on Monday handed lengthy prison terms to two men convicted of murdering one of the country's most notorious gangsters in 2009.

Vyacheslav Ivankov, alias Yaponchik or The Little Japanese, was shot in the abdomen by sniper fire as he left a glitzy Thai restaurant in the Russian capital. He died from his wounds several months later, in October 2009, aged 69.

Prosecutors said in March they had charged Murtazi Shadaniya, Dzhambul Dzhanashiya and Kakha Gazzayev, over Ivankov's murder, saying they had carried out the killing at the behest of a rival mobster.

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On Monday, Shadaniya was sentenced to 16 years in prison, while Dzhanashiya received 15 years, the Investigative Committee said. Both will serve their time in a strict regime penal colony.

Gazzayev had already received a 14-year prison sentence in April.

Two more men involved in the murder, Nugzar Papava and Astamur Butba – as well as the murder's mastermind Ilya Simoniya – have fled Russia. An international warrant has been issued for their arrest.

Ivankov was nicknamed "The Little Japanese" because of his short stature, facial features, and expertise in the martial art of ju-jitsu.

He began a career of racketeering, robbery, arms smuggling and drug trafficking in the 1960s and served lengthy jail terms before his release in 1991.

He fled Russia the following year, beginning a reign over the Russian community of Brighton Beach in Brooklyn, New York.

After serving a nine-year sentence in a U.S. prison, Ivankov was released in 2004 and deported to Russia.

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