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Russian Man on Trial in Germany Over Chechen Hitjob Plot

By AFP

June 15, 2022



Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov. **kremlin.ru**

A Russian man went on trial in Munich on Wednesday, charged with plotting to kill a Chechen dissident living in Germany on the orders of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

The suspect, named as Valid D., is accused of planning the murder commissioned by the state, carrying out shooting exercises with the intended hitman and spying on the target.

"A member of the security apparatus of Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov commissioned the accused Valid D. with the logistical organization of the killing of an opposition member" in the first half of 2020, prosecutors said.

The trial comes as Germany and Western allies have imposed unprecedented sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

The accused was arrested on Jan. 1, 2021, and has since been in pre-trial detention.

According to German media reports, the target was Mokhmad Abdurakhmanov, the brother of exiled Chechen blogger Tumso Abdurakhmanov, who lives in Sweden.

"The state-ordered killing was intended, in particular, to silence the brother of the targeted victim," the prosecutors said.

Valid D. is accused of procuring a weapon, selecting a hitman to carry out the murder and arranging for him to be brought to Germany.

He also allegedly spied on the target and his home in search of a suitable crime scene and carried out shooting exercises with the intended killer.

The man picked to carry out the murder claims to have accepted the offer only out of fear of reprisals, the prosecutors said.

Germany and Russia have been at odds over the years over several issues, including cyberattacks and a string of espionage cases that Berlin has blamed on Moscow.

A German court in December sentenced a Russian man to life in prison for shooting dead a former Chechen commander in a Berlin park in broad daylight, a murder prosecutors say was ordered by Moscow.

Kadyrov, a former rebel-turned-Kremlin-ally, has given his backing for Russian President Vladimir Putin's attack on Ukraine, sending his fighters to the country.

The Munich court has set 39 hearing dates up to the end of December for Valid D.'s trial.

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