

Russian Prisoners' Rights Activist Says Escaped Assassination

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Prisoners' rights activist Vladimir Osechkin. [facebook.com / vladimir.osechkin](https://facebook.com/vladimir.osechkin)

A prominent Russian prisoners' rights activist exiled in France [said](#) Monday he had escaped an assassination attempt which he blamed on Russian special services and organized crime.

Vladimir Osechkin heads the Gulagu.net project, which has in recent years published videos showing graphic scenes of torture and rape inside Russian prisons. Russian authorities placed him on a [wanted list](#) late last year for unspecified crimes.

In a video interview with independent journalist Yulia Latynina, Osechkin alleged that his assassination attempt took place less than a week ago in the southwestern French coastal town of Biarritz.

"I remember bringing plates to the children and seeing in my peripheral vision a red dot moving in my direction over the terrace railing," he said.

Osechkin described hearing shots but noted that he and his family had been warned of the

attempt and trained to take immediate measures.

“Our lights went out immediately, the kids dropped to the floor. We lowered the blinds, the proper services arrived, and an investigation began,” he said.

Related article: [Russia Adds Founder of Prisoners' Rights NGO to Wanted List](#)

Osechkin declined to say whether the alleged shooter — whom he only identified as “a man with close ties to the FSB and organized crime” — had been detained.

French authorities are now investigating the threats Osechkin, a source close to the probe told AFP on Tuesday.

Citing the ongoing investigation, Osechkin said he was unable to disclose further details of the alleged incident.

But he credited Bulgarian investigative journalist Christo Grozev for tipping him off on the alleged killer's movements. Grozev is the lead Russia investigator for Britain's investigative outfit Bellingcat, which publishes detailed reports into Russian agents using tools including passenger manifests.

Osechkin attributed the alleged attempt to the FSB's retribution for his work on collecting evidence of prisoner abuse and the widely publicized [recruitment of inmates](#) into Ukraine.

Russian officials have not commented on the exiled activist's allegations.

AFP contributed reporting.

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