

Hundreds Turn Out for Funeral of Assassinated Russian Military Blogger

By [AFP](#)

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Sergei Bobylev / TASS

Hundreds of supporters including Wagner Group founder Yevgeny Prigozhin turned out on Saturday for the funeral of Vladlen Tatarsky, the high-profile Russian military blogger who was killed in a bombing attack last weekend.

On Sunday an explosion ripped through a cafe on St. Petersburg's Neva river embankment, killing the controversial 40-year-old who was known for his staunch anti-Ukraine stance.

At a Kremlin ceremony announcing the annexation of four Ukrainian regions last September, Tatarsky recorded himself saying: "We will defeat everyone. We will kill everyone. We will rob everyone as necessary. Just as we like it."

Mourners, some carrying flowers, gathered at Moscow's prestigious Troyekurovskoye cemetery on Saturday amid a large police presence.

Some of those who came to pay their respects wore the letters Z and V on their clothing, pro-war symbols in Russia that show support for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Carrying lighted candles, priests in white robes led a funeral service at the cemetery. Tatarsky's awards were placed on velvet cushions near his casket. Among them was the Order of Courage, one of the country's top awards that President Vladimir Putin posthumously bestowed on Tatarsky for his "bravery."

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Tatarsky, who hailed from the eastern Ukrainian region of Donetsk, fought alongside pro-Kremlin separatists before becoming a popular blogger with half a million followers on social media.

In a statement released by his spokespeople, Prigozhin, whose Wagner group mercenaries are leading the Russian assault on towns in eastern Ukraine, praised the blogger for helping to "destroy the enemy."

"He is a soldier who stays with us, whose voice will always live and speak only the truth," Prigozhin added.

The Russian authorities have claimed without any evidence that supporters of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny helped the Ukrainian security services to carry out the attack. A 26-year-old Russian woman, Daria Trepova, was detained the following day and charged with terrorism.

Investigators say Trepova brought a statuette rigged with explosives to the cafe in St. Petersburg and handed it over to the blogger, whose real name was Maxim Fomin.

The attack is the second political assassination carried out in Russia in the past year. In August, Daria Dugina, the daughter of a prominent ultranationalist intellectual, was killed in a car bombing outside Moscow that Russia also blamed on Ukraine.

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