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Russia Says Former Bolshevik Party Leader Behind Pro-War Blogger's Murder

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Roman Popkov **Roman Popkov / Facebook**

Russian investigative authorities on Thursday named Roman Popkov, a journalist and former leader of the radical leftist National Bolshevik Party, as the organizer of a prominent pro-war blogger's assassination.

Vladlen Tatarsky, a vocal supporter of the invasion of Ukraine, was killed in a bomb blast after being gifted a golden figurine containing an explosive device at an April 2 event at a St. Petersburg cafe on April 2. Dozens of others were injured.

Shortly after the incident, Russian authorities arrested 26-year-old St. Petersburg native Daria Trepova, who was filmed handing Tatarsky the statuette.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said Popkov, 44, "corresponded with Trepova on social networks and gave her instructions regarding the preparation of a terrorist act."

The Investigative Committee charged Popkov — who currently lives in Ukraine — with criminal charges of “orchestrating an execution of a terrorist act” in absentia.

His name and photo had appeared on Russia's federal wanted list earlier Thursday.

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Though Popkov has confirmed being acquainted with Trepova, the activist denied that he was involved with Tatarasky’s murder or linked to the Ukrainian intelligence services, which Russia claims organized the attack.

“I gave no orders to Dasha and didn’t introduce her to any Ukrainian agents,” Popkov wrote on the Telegram messaging app shortly after Trepova’s arrest.

Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) in April named Ukrainian citizen Yuriy Denisov as another organizer of Tatarsky’s murder.

Ukrainian officials have described the St. Petersburg cafe bomb blast as an act of "domestic terrorism."

A Russian court on Thursday extended Trepova’s pre-trial arrest at Moscow’s notorious Lefortovo prison until Sept. 2.

The National Bolshevik Party is banned in Russia.

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