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Man Charged with Berlin Murder Attempt on Russian Media Staff

By AFP

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Berlin, Germany. **Ingo Joseph / unsplash**

Berlin prosecutors said Monday they had charged a 55-year-old Russian man with attempted murder for trying to set fire to a building housing employees of Russia's RIA Novosti news agency.

The man is suspected of having placed an improvised incendiary device in a basement shaft of the apartment building in late April 2022, just weeks after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

For reasons unknown, the device did not ignite, the Berlin public prosecutor's office said in a statement. It was discovered several days later and defused by specialists.

The suspect, whose name prosecutors did not disclose, was arrested last December and now faces charges of attempted murder and attempted aggravated arson.

Prior to his arrest, the accused had taken part in demonstrations against Russian President

Vladimir Putin and his government, including a protest camp outside the Russian Embassy in Berlin, prosecutors said.

He had also posted on social media about the building housing staff of Russia's state-run RIA Novosti news agency, saying a "war was being waged against us all" from there.

Prosecutors said the suspect was "not uncontroversial" among anti-Kremlin activists.

The man denies the allegations against him and claims to be the victim of a conspiracy by Russian intelligence services, prosecutors added. Extensive investigations however have found "no evidence" to support those claims, they said.

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