The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Arrests Suspect in Murder Plot Against Ex-Ukrainian Lawmaker

October 31, 2023



Oleg Tsarev. **Dimitar Dilkoff / AFP**

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said Tuesday it had detained a man allegedly involved in the attempted murder of Oleg Tsaryov, a former Ukrainian lawmaker who was once purportedly slated to lead a pro-Russian puppet government in Kyiv.

Tsaryov's associates said Friday that he was shot and badly wounded at his home in annexed Crimea, while a statement released by FSB on Tuesday described his condition as "satisfactory."

Law enforcement officials have not revealed the identity of the detained man they claim was involved in the attempted murder of the ex-lawmaker, saying only that he is a 46-year-old Russian citizen from the southern resort town of Yalta and was employed by Tsaryov.

"Witness testimonies and video surveillance confirmed that [the man], on the instructions of [Ukraine's SBU security service], organized the surveillance of Tsaryov and equipped a weapons cache that was later used in the assassination attempt," the FSB said.

Related article: Former Ukrainian Lawmaker Shot, Wounded in Annexed Crimea

Video shared by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency showed the man's arrest, followed by searches at his home as well as a confession statement.

"I was recruited by the SBU in January 2023," the 46-year-old man said in the video.

"I received instructions to gather information about [Tsaryov's] movements, location and weapons storage sites."

He said that he started working at the wellness clinic where Tsaryov lives in February of this year.

The FSB said it was still looking for the shooter in the murder attempt.

Tsaryov was a member of the Ukrainian parliament between 2002 and 2014.

After Russia annexed Crimea and separatists formed a pro-Moscow government in parts of eastern Ukraine, Tsaryov headed the parliament of a short-lived confederation called Novorossiya between 2014 and 2015.

He has since abandoned his political career to run three Soviet-style wellness clinics on the Black Sea in Crimea.

U.S. intelligence said on the eve of Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year that the Kremlin was eyeing Tsaryov to lead regime change in Kyiv, according to several media reports.

Tsaryov dismissed the reporting at the time, saying he was "not important enough."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/10/31/russia-arrests-suspect-in-murder-plot-against-ex-ukrainian-lawmaker-a82948