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Car Bomb Kills Pro-Kremlin Politician in Luhansk

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Oleg Popov. **lug-info.com**

A Moscow-backed politician in eastern Ukraine's Luhansk region has been killed in a bombing attack, Russian state media reported Wednesday.

Oleg Popov, a deputy in the pro-Kremlin Luhansk regional parliament, was killed Wednesday afternoon in the city of Luhansk, which has been under the control of Moscow-backed separatists since 2014.

"As a result of the car explosion near the Avangard sports stadium in Luhansk, our colleague... Oleg Nikolaevich Popov died," said Yuri Yurov, another deputy in Luhansk's regional parliament.

"It was the second assassination attempt on Oleg. The first was on September 20, 2022," Yurov continued, saying that Ukrainian security services had orchestrated the first attempt on Popov's life.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said it had launched a criminal investigation on charges of terrorism, as well as the illegal trafficking and production of explosives.

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Media reports had earlier claimed Popov had only been injured in the blast.

His death comes less than a month after a similar car bombing against a pro-Russian lawmaker and former militia leader in eastern Ukraine's Luhansk region.

Mikhail Filiponenko, who also served as a deputy in the Luhansk regional parliament, was killed on Nov. 9 when an "unidentified explosive device" detonated under his SUV.

Kyiv claimed responsibility for Filiponenko's assassination, vowing to continue targeting "war criminals and collaborators" working with Russia.

Dozens of high-profile backers of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and Moscow-installed officials have been targeted since President Vladimir Putin ordered the start of Russia's so-called "special military operation" in February 2022.

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