The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Kyiv Says Organized Killing of Pro-Russian Politician Near Moscow

By AFP

December 06, 2023



Illia Kyva on Russian state television. **Screenshot**

Kyiv said it orchestrated the assassination of a pro-Kremlin Ukrainian politician on Wednesday after an ex-lawmaker who had defected to Russia was shot dead outside Moscow.

Since Russia invaded last February, Ukraine has claimed to be behind a spate of assassinations and attacks on pro-war Russians and former Ukrainian officials who have backed Moscow's war.

A source in Ukraine's defense sector told AFP that its SBU security services had orchestrated the assassination of Illia Kyva, a former pro-Russian Ukrainian lawmaker who defected to Moscow when Russia invaded last year.

Russian investigators said Kyva had been shot.

His body was discovered in a park in the Moscow suburbs on Wednesday.

"An unknown person fired shots at the victim from an unidentified weapon. The man died on the spot from his injuries," Russia's Investigative Committee said in a statement.

It said it had opened a case into his death.

Related article: Car Bomb Kills Pro-Kremlin Politician in Luhansk

Speaking on national TV, Ukraine's military intelligence spokesperson Andriy Yusov said: "We can confirm that Kyva is done. Such a fate will befall other traitors of Ukraine, as well as the henchmen of the Putin regime."

Yusov called Kyva "one of the biggest scumbags, traitors and collaborators" and said his death was "justice."

The day before Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 Kyva said the country had been "soaked by Nazism" and needed "liberating" by Russia — echoing talking points regularly advanced by Russian officials and on state TV.

He had written to Russian President Vladimir Putin requesting Russian citizenship, and a court in Ukraine had sentenced him in absentia to 14 years for high treason.

In his most recent post on his Telegram channel, published Wednesday morning, Kyva had said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky would "be better off killing himself."

Car bombs

Kyiv used to rarely comment on whether it was behind several killings of pro-Russian figures, both inside Russia and in parts of Ukraine occupied by Russian forces.

But lately it has started to claim responsibility for a number of attacks and openly threatened to hunt down other "collaborators" and "traitors."

Moscow has previously said Ukraine was behind other audacious assassinations deep inside Russia's borders.

In August 2022, Russian nationalist Darya Dugina was killed outside Moscow in a car bombing, while an explosion at a St. Petersburg cafe in April killed Russian military blogger Vladlen Tatarsky.

Ukraine has not publicly claimed responsibility for those attacks, though U.S. intelligence and media reports have linked Kyiv to them.

Several lower-ranking Ukrainian officials and politicians who have welcomed Russia's invasion and worked for Russian-backed authorities in occupied parts of Ukraine have also been killed.

In a separate incident, a proxy lawmaker in Ukraine's eastern Lugansk region was killed in a

car bombing attack also on Wednesday, Russian investigators said.

Oleg Popov, who served as a deputy in the pro-Moscow Luhansk regional parliament, was killed after the "detonation of an unidentified device in a car," Russia's Investigative Committee said, without providing details.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/12/06/kyiv-says-organized-killing-of-pro-russian-politician-near-moscow-a83339