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Turkish Court Acquits Man Suspected of Murdering Russian Feminist Activist

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Anastasia Yemelyanova and Mohammad Nizar Arnabeh. **Social media**

A Syrian national accused of killing the Russian feminist and anti-war activist Anastasia Yemelyanova has been acquitted of a murder charge due to a lack of evidence against him, Turkish and Russian media reported Monday.

Mohammad Nizar Arnabeh was arrested in September after Yemelyanova, with whom he was in a relationship at the time, was found dead in their shared apartment in the eastern Turkish city of Erzurum.

A medical examination showed that Yemelyanova, who had moved to Turkey after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 and later settled in Erzurum to live with Arnabeh, died from blood loss, according to Turkish media.

Arnabeh denied the murder allegations, but local women's rights activists said he had changed his testimony four times at the start of the criminal investigation into the activist's death.

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The Erzurum 1st High Criminal Court found Arnabeh not guilty of the intentional killing of a woman, a felony punishable by life imprisonment, according to the Turkish daily Hurriyet.

Begum Osma, a volunteer lawyer with the Women and Children First Association NGO, called the acquittal "unexpected" given the reported inconsistencies in Arnabeh's statements. The lawyer vowed to appeal the court's decision.

Arnabeh's lawyers also said they were "thinking of appealing" the ruling since it had not been established that a crime was committed, Hurriyet reported.

Investigators previously accused Arnabeh of assaulting Yemelyanova and cutting her leg with a piece of glass.

According to the Russian independent news website Mediazona, Arnabeh initially claimed to have accidentally pushed Yemelyanova, causing her to fall on a glass coffee table.

He then said he had stabbed Yemelyanova with a piece of glass in the leg before ultimately denying that he was at home at the time she died.

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