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Police ‘Neutralize’ 4 Inmates After Hostage Standoff at Volgograd Region Prison

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Social media

Knife-wielding inmates killed at least three Russian prison guards Friday in a prison siege, officials said, with the assailants having apparent connections to the Islamic State (IS) group.

Russian special forces stormed IK-19 Surovikino penal colony in Russia's southern Volgograd region and shot dead all four attackers after an hours-long standoff.

"Four criminals took eight colony employees and four convicts hostage" during a disciplinary commission meeting, Russia's Federal Penitentiary Service (FSIN) said.

Photos shared by the pro-Kremlin Telegram news outlet Mash showed prison inmates with knives standing above bloodied guards. In unverified videos shared on Telegram, the alleged attackers said they were affiliated with the Islamic State militant group and taking revenge for the Crocus City Hall terror attack in March.

The assailants stabbed the employees, including some who tried to resist. At least three were killed, and there were conflicting reports from officials over the fate of a fourth prison guard.

After several hours, "snipers from the Russian National Guard's special forces in the Volgograd region neutralized four inmates with precise shots after they took prison staff hostage. All hostages have been safely freed," law enforcement officials were quoted as saying by the TASS news agency.

Related article: What We Know About the Prison Hostage Crisis in Russia's Volgograd

Volgograd Governor Andrei Bocharov said earlier that four prison employees were hospitalized but insisted that the uprising at IK-19 — which houses more than 1,200 inmates and is located around 120 kilometers (74.5 miles) west of the region's capital city Volgograd — posed no threat to public safety.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, launched a criminal case in connection with Friday's hostage-taking, a crime punishable by a maximum of life in prison.

President Vladimir Putin said earlier on Friday that he had been informed by the head of the prison service about the hostage situation in Volgograd, the second to have taken place in a southern Russian prison this summer.

In June, six prisoners who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State captured two guards at a detention center in the neighboring Rostov region. Five prisoners were killed and one was later sentenced to 20 years in prison on terrorism charges.

The same Telegram channels that circulated graphic photos allegedly taken at IK-19 claimed that the prisoners who took hostages on Friday may also be members of the Islamic State terrorist group.

AFP contributed reporting.

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