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Crimean Pair Arrested Over Russian Naval Officer's Car Bomb Killing

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Sergei Malgavko / TASS

Russian law enforcement authorities in annexed Crimea arrested a man and a woman suspected of killing a senior Russian naval officer in a car bombing last week, investigators said Tuesday.

Ukraine's security service (SBU) claimed responsibility for the attack in Sevastopol, which killed Captain First Rank Valery Trankovsky, chief of staff of Russia's 41st missile ship brigade in the Black Sea.

Russia's Investigative Committee identified the suspected bombers as a 38-year-old woman who monitored Trankovsky's movements and a 47-year-old man who constructed and planted an explosive device under his car.

Investigators said both the man and the woman, who were charged with terrorism and arms trafficking, are cooperating with law enforcement and provided confessions.

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Footage released by Russian state media showed the pair, with blurred faces, giving statements about being recruited by Ukrainian agents.

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), which made the arrests, alleged that the attack was ordered by SBU counterintelligence head Yuri Murilev under the guidance of SBU deputy head Oleksandr Poklad.

A Crimean court placed the 47-year-old man in pretrial detention for two months, while the woman is expected to be placed in detention soon.

Independent news outlet Agentstvo reported that documents shown in the FSB video identify the man as Vitaly Kulchitsky, born in Ukraine's Lviv region and a resident of Crimea since before its annexation by Russia in 2014.

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