

# Moscow Bomb Attack Kills Pro-Kremlin Paramilitary Leader Wanted in Ukraine

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## Moskva News Agency

An explosion that ripped through a residential complex lobby in northwestern Moscow early Monday killed a pro-Kremlin paramilitary leader from eastern Ukraine, state media [reported](#), citing medical and law enforcement authorities.

Armen Sarkisyan, founder of the irregular Arbat Battalion, died after being hospitalized in critical condition, the state-run TASS news agency reported. Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, later confirmed his death.

According to the Kommersant business daily, one of Sarkisyan's bodyguards was also killed in the blast. Five people were wounded overall, it added.

Video shared by law enforcement officials [showed](#) extensive damage in the lobby of the Scarlet Sails residential complex on the banks of the Moscow River.

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The state-run TASS news agency, citing unnamed law enforcement officials, reported that the bomb attack was “ordered and carefully planned,” but did not specify who was suspected to have been behind the blast.

Investigators [said](#) they were at the explosion scene as part of a criminal investigation. Kommersant noted that the probe could be reclassified as a terrorism investigation if evidence emerges of suspected Ukrainian involvement.

Kommersant reported that Sarkisyan’s Arbat Battalion, which fights on the side of Russia in its war against Ukraine, is made up of around 500 people, most of whom are ethnic Armenians.

Besides leading the irregular military unit, Russian media described Sarkisyan as the head of the boxing federation in the Russian-occupied Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine.

According to Ukrainian media, Kyiv [issued](#) an international arrest warrant for Sarkisyan in 2014 over violence against pro-EU protesters. Ukraine’s SBU security services [describe](#) him as a “criminal authority” with connections to former president Viktor Yanukovich, who fled to Russia in 2014.

In December, Kyiv listed Sarkisyan as a suspect in an ongoing investigation into Russia’s recruitment of prisoner fighters for the war.

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