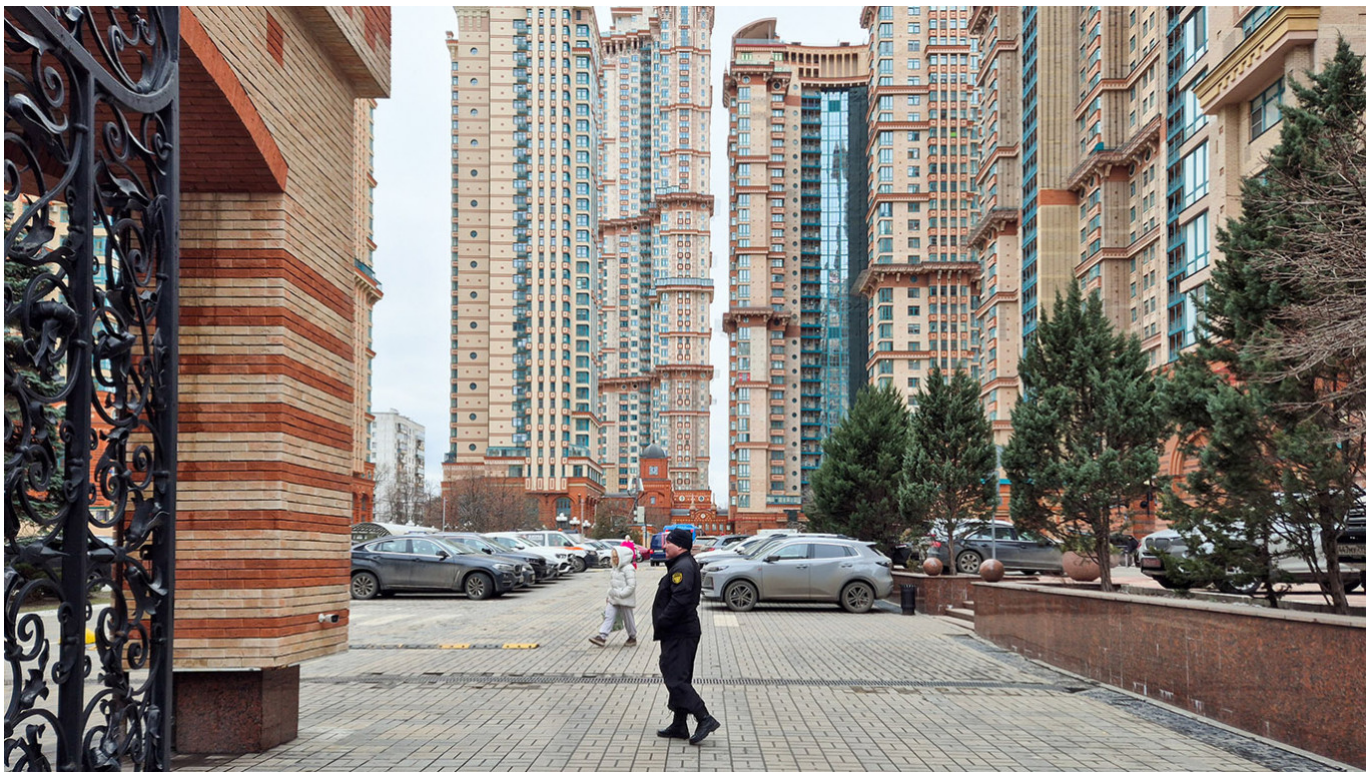
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Pro-Kremlin Paramilitary Leader Killed in Suspected Suicide Bombing – Reports

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The Scarlet Sails residential complex in Moscow. **Denis Voronin / Moskva News Agency**

A bomb explosion that killed a pro-Kremlin paramilitary leader from eastern Ukraine may have been a suicide attack, Russian media reported Tuesday, citing law enforcement sources.

Armen Sarkisyan, founder of the Arbat Battalion, which fights for Russia in Ukraine, died from his injuries after being hospitalized Monday. Another person was also killed, and four others were wounded in the blast.

"The leading theory is that the explosion in the Scarlet Sails residential complex was committed by a suicide bomber," the Interfax news agency quoted an unnamed law enforcement official as saying. "Early indications are that he detonated an explosive device that he brought with him."

Surveillance footage allegedly showed a Soviet-era anti-personnel mine exploding near a man who greeted Sarkisyan in the building lobby, the Kommersant business daily, also citing police sources, reported.

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Initial unverified reports suggested the bomb may have been planted in the hallway before the attack. Fingerprint data suggests the suspected bomber may have been an Armenian national with a prior criminal conviction, according to Kommersant.

Authorities are investigating a power struggle or blood feud as a possible motive, Interfax reported. If evidence of Ukrainian involvement emerges, the case may be reclassified as a terrorism investigation.

Kyiv issued an arrest warrant for Sarkisyan in 2014 over violence against pro-EU protesters. Ukraine's SBU security services described him as a "criminal authority" with connections to former president Viktor Yanukovych, who fled to Russia in 2014.

His Arbat Battalion, which fights as an irregular on the side of Russia in its war against Ukraine, is made up of around 500 people, most of whom are ethnic Armenians.

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

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