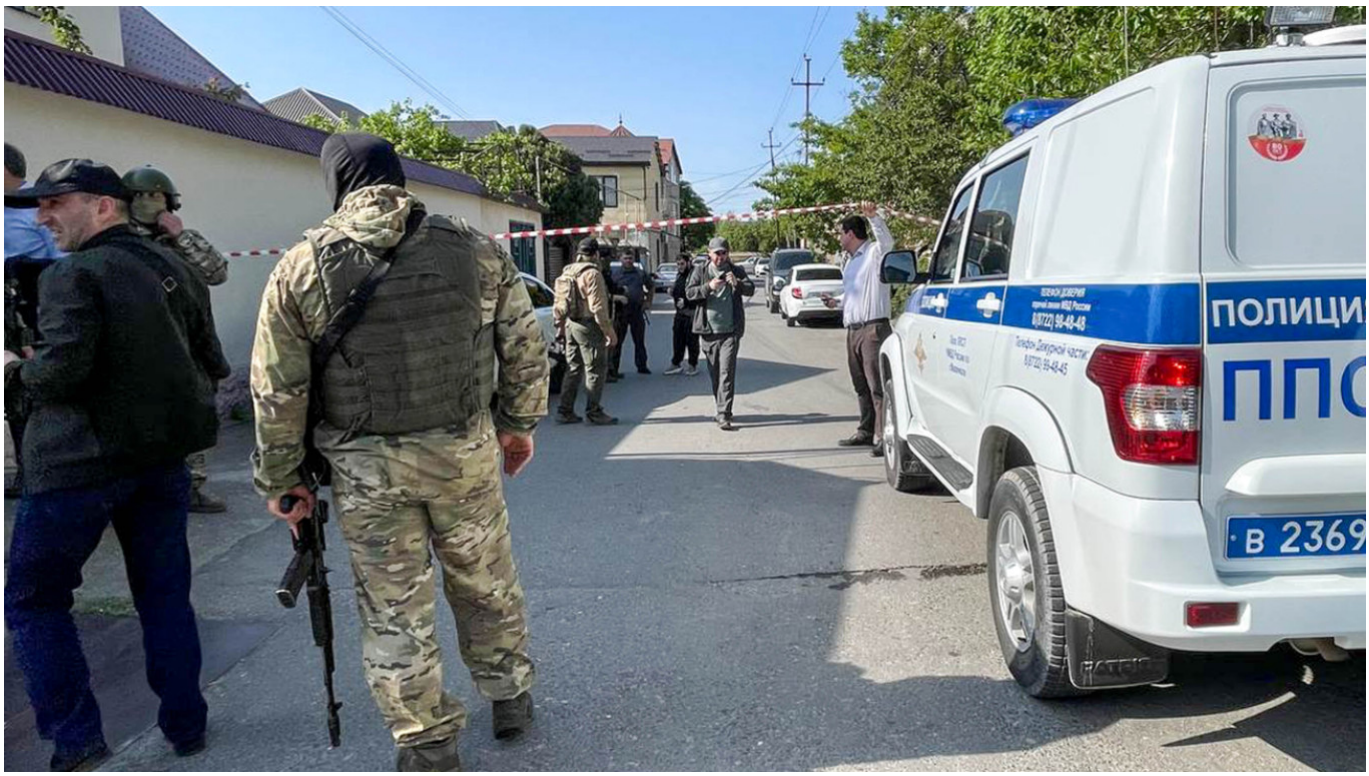
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Shootout in Dagestan Leaves 3 Police Officers and 2 Gunmen Dead

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Gandzhavi Gadzhibalaev / TASS

Three traffic police officers and two gunmen were killed in a shootout in the North Caucasus republic of Dagestan, authorities and media reported Monday.

Eyewitness videos shared on social media showed officers firing their weapons in the capital city of Makhachkala as bystanders looked on.

Dagestan regional head Sergei Melikov said the shootout began when a driver opened fire during a routine traffic stop.

The Dagestan branch of Russia's Interior Ministry confirmed the deaths of three officers and said the assailants fled the scene in a stolen police vehicle.

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"An interception plan has been introduced and measures are being taken to locate and detain

the attackers," police said in a statement on Telegram.

Initial casualty reports varied widely, but the military broadcaster Zvezda later cited local officials as saying that one police officer survived the attack and was hospitalized, though no details were given about his condition. Two gunmen were killed in the shootout, including one who later died at the hospital.

Dagestan's Health Ministry said six people were wounded, including two police officers, two civilians — one of them a 17-year-old girl — and the two attackers.

Investigators launched a criminal investigation into the attempted murder of law enforcement officers, auto theft and weapons trafficking.

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