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Armenian Police Say 2 Russian Nationals Suspected in Murder of Chechen Woman Last Year

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Ayshat Baimuradova. **Social media**

Armenian police investigators have identified two Russian citizens as suspects in the murder of a Chechen woman who was said to have fled domestic violence, BBC News Russian reported Tuesday.

Ayshat Baimuradova, 23, was found dead in October in a rented apartment in the Armenian capital of Yerevan. Armenian law enforcement authorities launched a murder investigation the following month.

In a statement sent to BBC News Russian, investigators said that Russian nationals Karina Iminova and Said-Khamzat Baisarov are suspected of murdering Baimuradova. They are believed to have since returned to Russia.

Iminova and Baisarov acted on the instructions of a "not yet identified person," according to

Armenian investigators.

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BBC News Russian previously reported that Iminova, who claims to be from the republic of Dagestan near Chechnya, first made contact with Baimuradova on social media. Iminova was reportedly with Baimuradova on the night of her death on Oct. 20.

Security camera footage showed Iminova and Baisarov leaving the building where Baimuradova's body was found.

Earlier, investigative news outlets identified Baisarov as a relative of Ruslan Baisarov, a Chechen energy and construction businessman and friend of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

According to BBC News Russian, Armenia requested Russia's help in the murder investigation in December, but it has yet to receive any response. On Dec. 1, Armenian investigators issued an Interpol notice for Iminova and Baisarov.

The cause of Baimuradova's death remains unknown, with investigators saying she may have been strangled.

SK SOS, a crisis group that helps people facing danger in the North Caucasus, said Baimuradova's body has still not been released because Armenian authorities have not received a response from her relatives about organizing a burial.

Baimuradova had reportedly been living with friends in Yerevan after fleeing Chechnya with the help of a human rights organization that helps women from the North Caucasus region.

Rights groups regularly highlight the issue of domestic abuse against women in the conservative republic of Chechnya.

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