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Car Bomb Kills Military Officer in St. Petersburg

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@fontankaspb / Telegram

A Russian military official has been killed in a car explosion in St. Petersburg, investigators said Thursday, with local media identifying his rank as lieutenant colonel.

The blast occurred around 10 a.m. local time near a supermarket in the Shushary neighborhood, the news outlet Fontanka reported.

Investigators later confirmed the military official's death but described the incident only as a "vehicle fire," not an explosion. They also said his wife, who was also inside the car at the time of the blast, was receiving medical treatment.

The Investigation Committee, Russia's top investigative body, said it launched a criminal probe into the incident.

The exiled news outlet Agentstvo said pro-war Telegram channels identified the victim as 43-year-old Sergei Sechkov. The outlet said it confirmed Sechkov's death with his father in brief

online comments.

Officials have not revealed the officer's identity.

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Russia has accused Ukraine of carrying out several assassinations of military officers since the full-scale invasion. Ukrainian sources have claimed responsibility for some of the attacks while denying involvement in others.

Ukraine has not commented on the car explosion in St. Petersburg.

Later on Friday, Fontanka reported that Russian law enforcement identified a 24-year-old woman who was allegedly recruited by Ukrainian handlers online to plant a "powerful and complex" bomb under the military officer's car on Wednesday night.

The woman was said to have boarded a flight to Turkey early Thursday morning and, by the time Russian authorities contacted Turkish law enforcement, had already flown to Moldova.

A Russian military officer was last killed in a bomb attack in annexed Crimea earlier this month. Police arrested a woman suspected of assassinating him on behalf of Ukraine.

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