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Convicted Nemtsov Killers Secretly Freed Under Guise of Ukraine War Service – Proekt

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Anzor Gubashev and Zaur Dadaev. **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

The individuals convicted in the assassination of Russian opposition figure Boris Nemtsov appear to be out of prison, the exiled investigative outlet Proekt reported Monday, citing leaked state databases, court filings and a source familiar with the matter.

Five Chechen men were sentenced to extensive prison terms in 2017 for the February 2015 shooting death of former Deputy Prime Minister Nemtsov, who was an outspoken critic of President Vladimir Putin. Only one served a full prison sentence.

Three of the convicts, including triggerman Zaur Dadayev, reportedly signed military contracts that secured their early release from penal colonies.

"No one has to find out that you're free, otherwise you'll go back," Proekt quoted the source outlining the condition for their release.

Dadayev, whose 20-year prison sentence was set to expire in 2035, reportedly married while incarcerated and registered in a remote mountain settlement near the ancestral village of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

The other two, brothers Shadid and Anzor Gubashev, also reportedly married after being transferred to a prison colony in the republic of Chechnya and then disappearing from prison registries. Their prison terms were not set to expire until 2031 and 2034, respectively.

State media reported in August 2024 that the fourth convict, Temirlan Eskerkhanov, left a prison colony early into his 14-year sentence after signing a Defense Ministry contract. Proekt reported that leaked records show Eskerkhanov was issued a new Russian passport in Ukraine's occupied Donetsk region that July.

Khamzat Bakhayev is the only member of the group to serve his full 11-year prison sentence, walking free earlier this spring after being transferred to Chechnya.

Ruslan Mukhudinov, whom investigators had named as the alleged organizer of the hit, remains at large in Chechnya despite being placed on Russia's federal wanted list in 2015, according to leaked civil registry records cited by Proekt.

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