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Prosecution Seeks to Drop Khachaturyan Sisters Murder Case

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

State prosecutors have urged a Moscow court to dismiss the high-profile case against three sisters who killed their abusive father in 2018, the state-run news agency RIA Novosti reported Wednesday.

Investigators in January reopened the case against Krestina, Angelina and Maria Khachaturyan to determine whether they acted with criminal intent or in self-defense. Last year, their slain father Mikhail Khachaturyan was found guilty of sexual abuse, pornography and causing serious bodily harm.

"We believe the investigator's actions are unlawful," a prosecutor was quoted telling the Basmanny District Court during a hearing on a defense complaint over investigative delays.

"The Khachaturyan sisters acted in a state of necessary self-defense, on which grounds the case is subject to termination and the preventive measures must be lifted," they said.

Furthermore, the prosecutor criticized colleagues from Russia's top investigative body, the Investigative Committee, for repeatedly extending the probe without issuing a final decision, thus "grossly violating" rules on reasonable timeframes.

It remains unclear if the prosecution's position will lead to a dismissal of the charges. According to RIA Novosti, the case investigator insisted during Wednesday's hearing that there were no grounds to dismiss the case or lift restrictions on the sisters.

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The sisters, who were 17, 18 and 19 when they admitted to killing their 57-year-old father in July 2018, have been barred from communicating with one another for more than eight years under pre-trial restrictions.

The case sparked nationwide debate in Russia, dividing public opinion between those who viewed the sisters as acting in self-defense and those who considered the killing a crime, coming amid broader criticism of Russia's weak domestic violence protections.

A final decision on whether or not to close the case is expected by the end of 2026, one of the sisters' lawyers said last week.

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