

24
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▲ Lvl. 1

No state
reply yet

Russian Federation n° 40/2018

Alert created on: 24 Apr 2018

Russian Journalist Dies Under Suspicious Circumstances

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ Unknown

CATEGORY  ▶ Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

NO STATE REPLY YET

PARTNER: CPJ, Article 19, EFJ/IFJ, PEN, RSF

Maksim Borodin, a Yekaterinburg-based investigative correspondent for the independent news website Novy Den, died on 15 April 2018 after falling on 12 April from the balcony of his fifth-floor apartment, local media and his employer reported.

In the few weeks prior to his death, Borodin gained national attention for his reporting on the deaths in Syria of Russian private military contractors fighting on the side of President Bashar al-Assad, according to the Guardian. The journalist also reported on corruption and the prison system in his native region of Sverdlovsk, the paper reported.

Russian police did not open a criminal investigation into Borodin's death saying there was no evidence pointing to suspicious circumstances surrounding his death, according to reports.

An unnamed spokesperson for Yekaterinburg's branch of Russia's Investigative Committee, the agency tasked with probing serious crimes, told the state news agency TASS that Borodin's apartment was locked from the inside and investigators did not find a suicide note in the journalist's apartment.

According to Yekaterina Norseyeva, a Novy Den correspondent in Yekaterinburg, it was "very unlikely" that Borodin had committed suicide. "He was going to be transferred to our Moscow bureau; he was full of plans," she said.

Borodin's friend, Vyacheslav Bashkov, on 15 April wrote on his Facebook page that Borodin contacted him at 5 a.m. on 11 April and said that "security forces" wearing camouflage and face masks were on his balcony and in the interior staircase of his building. Borodin told Bashkov that he thought the security forces were waiting for a court order to search his

apartment and asked Bashkov to help him find a lawyer, according to the Facebook post.

Bashkov wrote on Facebook that Borodin called him back an hour later and said he was mistaken and the security officers were conducting a drill.

In his Facebook post, Bashkov said that he went to local police after he found out about Borodin's death, but police seemed uninterested and "did not question [him] about much."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

-  Letter of the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions/UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression/UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination
-  Report by PEN International "Russia's Strident Stifling of Free Speech 2012-2018"
-  RSF report: "RSF calls for full probe into reporter's death in Yekaterinburg"
-  CPJ report: "CPJ calls for investigation into death of Russian journalist Maksim Borodin"

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