

3 Killed in St. Pete Armored Car Heist

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The bodies of dead guards lying at the scene of a robbery next to their armored car in St. Petersburg on Tuesday.

Investigators said Tuesday that robbers carrying assault rifles in a baby carriage fatally shot two guards and a man walking his dog and got away with more than \$800,000 worth of cash in St. Petersburg.

Andrei Lavrenko, head of the local branch of the Investigative Committee, said on NTV television that the robbers stole more than 25 million rubles on Tuesday.

NTV said the attackers waited outside a commercial bank, one of them holding a baby carriage where two Kalashnikov rifles were hidden. RIA-Novosti reported that the money belonged to Loko Bank.

When the guards got out of their armored truck and walked toward the bank with bags full of cash, the two assailants sprayed them with automatic gunfire, killing both on the spot.

One of the attackers also shot a man walking his dog, apparently fearing that he could help police identify them. The perpetrators face up to life in prison on murder and robbery charges,

investigators said.

Such attacks have been commonplace in Russia in recent years.

In July, a traffic police officer and an unemployed man were detained on suspicion of staging a daring robbery in June that left three dead and 131 million rubles (\$4.3 million) missing from an armored van in downtown Moscow.

In February, a cash collector who stole 250 million rubles (\$8.3 million) from a Sberbank armored truck was sentenced to eight years in prison by a Perm court. The truck's driver also got eight years in prison for acting as an accomplice.

To prevent attacks on its armored vans, state-run Sberbank said last year that it would start buying special carrying cases that would destroy cash if forced open.

(AP, MT)

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