

Chechens Lose Appeal of Murder Sentences

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Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, second from left, at a horse race in Rostov in 2010. **Denis Grishkin**

A Vienna court has upheld the sentences of three Chechens implicated in the high-profile murder of an exiled critic of Chechnya's leader, Kommersant reported Wednesday on its website.

Umar Israilov, 27, had been a bodyguard for Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, but he later denounced Kadyrov. Israilov was shot dead outside a grocery store in Vienna in 2009.

He had sought asylum in Austria after filing a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights accusing Kadyrov of torture and numerous kidnappings.

In June, a lower court sentenced Otto Kaltenbrunner, Suleiman Dadayev and Turpal-Ali Yeshekyayev to life, 19 years and 16 years in prison, respectively. On Tuesday, Vienna's Higher Regional Court upheld the sentences on appeal.

The alleged gunman, Lecha Bogatyryov, remains at large.

Israilov, a father of four, was a key witness against Russia before the European Court of Human Rights.

His accounts of abuse — including being beaten by Kadyrov's cousin Adam Delimkhanov, a State Duma deputy, in Kadyrov's presence — had also formed the basis of a criminal complaint against Kadyrov on charges of torture and attempted duress filed by Austrian lawyers in June 2008.

Austrian investigators have theorized that Kadyrov ordered Israilov's abduction but instead had him killed when the original plan went awry. Kadyrov has denied any involvement in the killing.

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