

Acid Attack Made on Bolshoi Ballet Director

January 17, 2013



Sergei Filin

An unknown assailant threw acid in the face of Bolshoi Ballet director Sergei Filin in an attack that police have tentatively linked to his professional activities.

Filin was hospitalized with severe burns after the attack, which occurred near his apartment in the city center Thursday just before midnight, RIA-Novosti reported. The perpetrator fled and remains at large. So far no witnesses have come forward.

No specific motive was immediately named by police or Filin's associates, though Bolshoi spokeswoman Yekaterina Novikova said unknown people have been threatening Filin.

An unnamed police spokesperson told Interfax that a link to the ballet director's job was the most likely explanation but that a personal motive could not be excluded.

Filin had third-degree burns to his face, as well as burns to his eyes, Novikova said. He was in stable condition in City Hospital No. 36, the RIA-Novosti report said.

A [third-degree burn](#) extends through two layers of skin into subcutaneous tissue and requires [comprehensive](#) in-patient medical treatment.

Novikova said Filin's condition was stable but his eyesight was endangered — both a physical threat and a career danger for someone who watches and directs dancers.

A team of doctors from the hospital and specialists from Moscow's Helmholtz Institute for Eye Diseases performed an hour-long operation on Filin's eyes on Friday, the head of Moscow's healthcare department, Georgy Golukhov, told Interfax.

“[The operation] went according to plan. It went well,” Golukhov said.

The city health official denied national media reports that Filin would be treated in Belgium.

Interfax reported that the Russian Embassy in Brussels said there was a plan to treat him in Belgium, and Channel One state television also reported that Filin would be flown there.

But Golukhov said that no one had requested a medical evacuation for Filin. “Moscow doctors have sufficient professionalism and resources to give the victim all of the needed help,” he told reporters. “If we undertake a patient's treatment, we will take upon ourselves the full responsibility for him,” he said.

Filin became the Bolshoi Ballet's artistic director in March 2011. A former dancer, he had joined the renowned ballet troupe in 1988. In 2008, he hung up his shoes to become the artistic director of Moscow's Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater.

Filin received the title of “national artist of Russia,” one of the state's highest arts honors, in 2001, according to the [Bolshoi website](#).

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