

Investigators Open Inquiry Into Beketov's Death

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Moscow region investigators opened an inquiry Tuesday into the circumstances surrounding the death of Khimki forest activist Mikhail Beketov, while relatives and local authorities quarreled over where to bury Beketov.

Beketov, the former editor-in-chief of the Khimskaya Pradva newspaper, died on Monday at the hospital where he was being treated for permanent disabilities sustained in a severe beating on the night of Nov. 13, 2008.

His supporters have linked the attack, which remains unsolved, to the Khimki city administration and his efforts to prevent them from clearing part of the centuries-old Khimki forest to make way for a new highway between Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Beketov, who lost his ability to speak and walk after the attack, choked to death while eating in the hospital, according to initial findings.

"We have conducted a preliminary inquiry into the death of Beketov," said Gennady Galuza, an official with the Moscow region branch of the Investigative Committee.

"The body has now been sent for a forensic examination," he told Interfax.

Meanwhile, Khimki city officials agreed to meet with Beketov's relatives on Wednesday to discuss where to bury Beketov, Interfax said. The meeting was scheduled after the relatives asked for a burial spot at the Novokurkinskoye or Novoluzhinskoye cemeteries, but the authorities instead offered a plot at the Novoskhodnenskoye cemetery, saying the other two had no available places.

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