

Details Emerge About Far East Church Shooter

By [Anna Dolgov](#)

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Russian Orthodox priests conducting a service inside the cathedral where two were killed and six injured Sunday. **Sergei krasnoukhov**

The man who opened fire in a Russian Orthodox church, killing two people, was a security guard who received his rifle as a duty weapon to accompany a cash-in-transit car, a news report said.

The suspected shooter, an employee of a private security firm who is about 25 years old, will undergo a psychiatric evaluation to determine whether he is fit to stand trial, Vesti FM radio reported Sunday.

The suspect is a former marine, who had passed a psychiatric evaluation before being hired as a security guard, Moskovsky Komsomolets reported Monday, without citing any sources.

The shooter barged into the Cathedral of the Resurrection in the town of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk,

on the Sakhalin Island off Russia's Far Eastern coast, at the end of a Sunday morning service and opened fire, killing a nun and a churchgoer and injuring six other people. Most of the wounded were hit on their legs, and were not critically hurt.

"He started shooting not just at people, but also at icons, in what I would say was a very demonstrative execution," Sakhalin Archbishop Tikhon said in a video interview published on the regional Orthodox diocese website.

As churchgoers tried to escape, a man and a nun stopped and "tried to appeal to the his reason, and he shot them," a local priest, Viktor Gorbach, said in an interview to LifeNews television.

The attacker, who was seized at the scene, disclosed no motives to investigators, a spokeswoman for Sakhalin branch of the Investigative Committee, Natalya Makhonina, said, Interfax reported.

A medical examination showed that he was drunk at the time of the shooting, she said.

After receiving his duty weapon to accompany a cash-in-transit vehicle, the suspected shooter supposedly went home and changed from his guard uniform into a black jacket with a fascist swastika on the back, Moskovsky Komsomolets reported Monday, without citing any sources.

The attacker "was laughing at [churchgoers], mocking, shooting at icons," Gorbach said, Moskovsky Komsomolets reported. "He told parishioners: 'pray,' in a mockery of faith."

Concerns about violence and gun control have flared up in Russia after a teenager armed with a rifle killed a teacher and a police officer at a Moscow school and held his classmates hostage earlier this month.

Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill held a prayer service on Sunday for the victims of the Sakhalin shooting, Itar-Tass reported.

While the attack had no apparent connection to the threats of violence that clouded preparations for the Winter Olympics taking place in Sochi thousands of kilometers to the west, another service was also held in Black Sea resort, and Games volunteers and medics joined the prayers, the Moscow Orthodox Patriarchy said in an online statement.

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