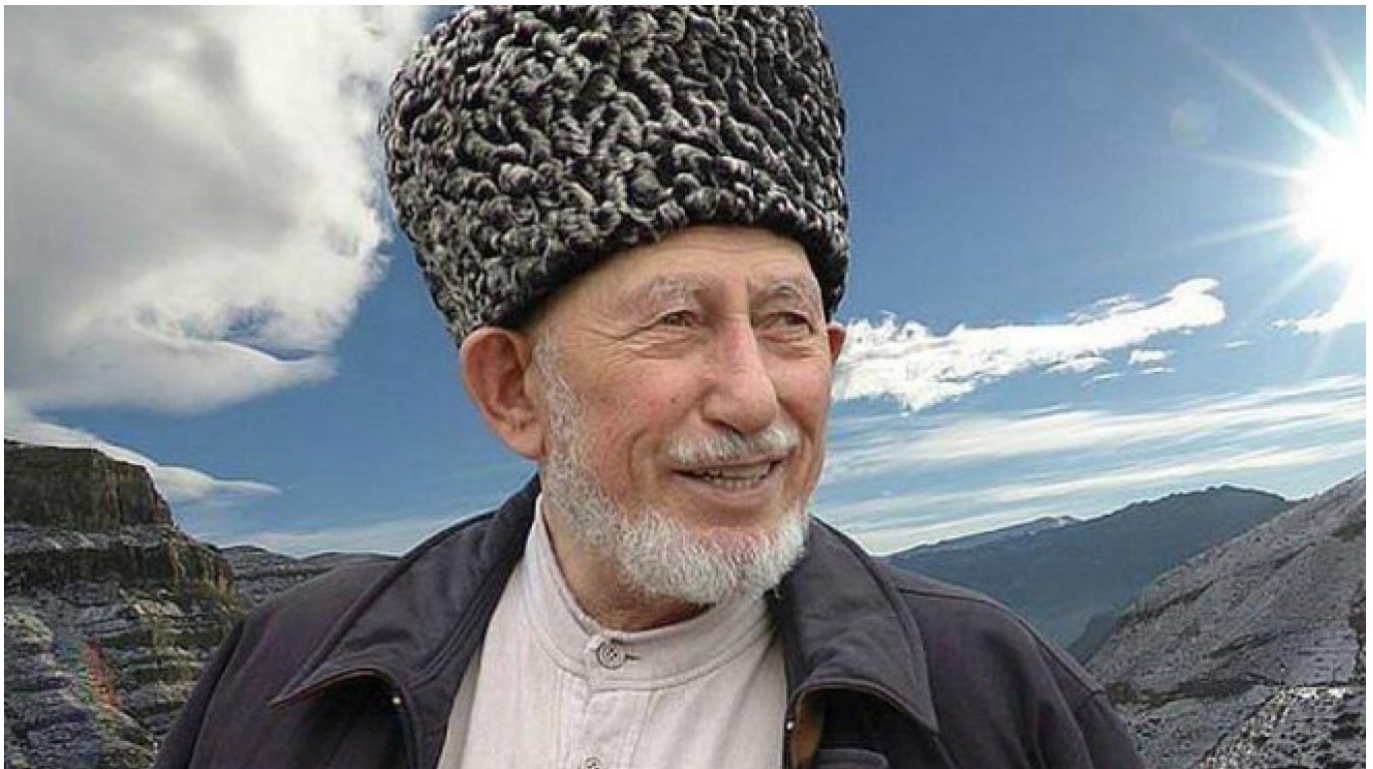


Three Sentenced to Life in Prison for 2012 Murder of Dagestani Religious Leader

April 21, 2015



Said Afandi al-Chirkawi

Three men have been sentenced to life in prison for their involvement in the 2012 terror attack that killed a prominent Dagestani religious leader and six other people, the Interfax news agency reported Monday.

Said Afandi al-Chirkawi, a Sufi religious leader in Russia's predominantly Muslim republic of Dagestan, was killed when a female suicide bomber detonated her explosives inside his rural home in August 2012.

Shikhmirza Labazanov, Magomedu Gadzhiyev and Magomedali Amirkhanov were sentenced to life behind bars for having provided the suicide bomber with explosives and accompanying her to the sheikh's residence. Another accomplice, identified as Akhmed Israpilov, was given a sentence of 12 years in prison, Interfax reported.

The defendants' lawyers have said they will appeal the court's ruling, Interfax reported.

Two other defendants in the case, brothers Shamil and Makhulav Sidikbegov, were sentenced last April to 16 and 13 years in prison, respectively, the Kommersant newspaper reported at the time.

Al-Chirkawi agreed to meet with the suicide bomber, an ethnic Russian woman named Alla Saprykina, because she claimed she wanted to convert to Islam. The bomber, who also went by the name Aminat Kurbanova, had reportedly already converted to Islam and embraced the Salafi movement, which advocates a literalist approach to the religion.

Russia's National Anti-Terrorism Committee said earlier this week that special forces had killed Aliaskhab Kebekov, the leader of the Caucasus Emirate terrorist organization, who is believed to have taken part in the organization of al-Chirkawi's murder.

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