

Witness in High-Profile Russian Mafia Bribe Case Shot Dead

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Albert Dzen / TASS

A key witness in a bribery case that has brought down several of Moscow's senior crime-fighting officials has been shot dead in his car outside St. Petersburg.

Businessman Badri Shengelia, 53, [testified](#) in court last February that he had paid Mikhail Maximenko, the head of security at Moscow's Investigative Committee, \$50,000 in 2015 to launch a criminal probe. Maximenko was sentenced to 13 years in 2018 for receiving a \$500,000 bribe from a notorious mob boss to soften the sentences of gang members involved in a restaurant shootout.

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Investigators [opened](#) a murder case on Monday after Shengelia's body was found with several gunshot wounds inside a Mercedes on a St. Petersburg highway.

The Fontanka news website [reported](#) that Shengelia's car had been shot at least six times from an unidentified vehicle.

Interfax quoted an unnamed source as [saying](#) the investigation will look into any connections between Shengelia's murder and his admission to paying a bribe to Maximenko, among other leads.

The \$500,000 bribery case implicated the former deputy head of Moscow's Investigative Committee, Denis Nikandrov, who was handed a jail sentence of 5.5 years in the case last month and his retired ex-boss Alexander Drymanov, who was arrested on the same charges this summer. Maximenko's deputy head of security was also sentenced to 5 years behind bars.

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