

Suspected Gunmen in Wildberries Shootout Ask to Fight in Ukraine

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Akhmed Magomedkhalilov, a defendant in the Wildberries shooting case. **Maxim Shipenkov / EPA / TASS**

Several men accused of being involved in last week's shootout at the headquarters of online retailer Wildberries are seeking to join the Russian military and fight in Ukraine, the Kommersant business daily [reported](#) Tuesday, citing sources familiar with the matter.

Two security guards were killed and several others injured during the Sep. 18 [shooting](#) outside the Wildberries head office in Moscow. The company said an armed group of men, led by Vladislav Bakalchuk, the estranged husband of Wildberries founder Tatiana Kim, attempted to forcibly enter the building.

Kommersant reported that law enforcement officials held "conversations" with nearly three dozen defendants regarding their right to seek exemption from criminal liability by joining the military. Each defendant faces multiple charges, including murder, conspiracy to commit murder, illegal arms trafficking, attempted murder of a law enforcement official and vigilantism.

Several of the charges carry a maximum punishment of life in prison.

Related article: [Wildberries Founder's Ex-Husband Arrested After Deadly Office Shootout](#)

In March, President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) a law allowing individuals accused of committing a crime to join the military with the possibility of having their criminal records expunged. However, this does not apply to those suspected or convicted of committing serious felonies like treason, espionage, terrorism and sex crimes.

According to Kommersant, some of the men charged for their alleged involvement in the Wildberries shootout do not hold Russian citizenship. Defendants who sign military contracts and complete their service could be exempt from criminal liability and qualify for a simplified path to Russian citizenship.

On Thursday, Vladislav Bakalchuk's lawyers [said](#) he was charged with multiple criminal offenses, including murder, attempted murder, vigilantism and attempted murder of a law enforcement officer.

The lawyers called the charges an "unprecedented violation" of their client's rights, insisting that the office security staff had opened fire first. They further alleged that investigators were pressuring Vladislav's legal team, but did not provide further details.

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