



Investigators establish link between Moscow terrorist attack suspects and Ukrainian nationalists

Description

WORLD : The suspects in last week's Moscow terrorist attack were linked to Ukrainian nationalists, the Russian Investigative Committee stated on Thursday, citing preliminary findings. The perpetrators had received "significant sums of money" from Ukraine, the law enforcement agency said.

Investigators have obtained "substantiated evidence" that the suspected assailants received funding from Ukraine in the form of cryptocurrency, which was then used to prepare the terrorist attack, the statement read.

Law enforcement officers have also identified and detained another suspect who was allegedly involved in financing the attack, the Investigative Committee said, without identifying the individual.

Earlier, the head of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), Aleksandr Bortnikov, told reporters that the US, UK and Ukraine may have been behind the attack.

The Ukrainians may have been preparing a "window" for them to cross back over the border, the official said. "On the other side, they were to be welcomed as heroes," he added.

The four suspected perpetrators had previously been identified as radical Islamists, recruited through an online chat apparently operated by the Afghanistan-based offshoot of Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS).

However, the investigators said at that time that, despite the group's claim of responsibility for the terrorist act, another party, such as a Ukrainian intelligence agency, may have been involved in the plot.

Last Friday, a group of men armed with assault rifles stormed the Crocus City Hall music venue in the Moscow suburb of Krasnogorsk, just before a concert by the rock band Picnic. The attack and a subsequent blaze started by the perpetrators claimed the lives of 140 people and injured some 200 others.

The assailants were apprehended hours after the attack in Russia's Bryansk Region, which borders Ukraine.

by TLB Staff

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