



Moscow Accuses Kiev's 'Special Services' in Russian Journalist's Car Bombing

Description

RUSSIA: The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) accused Kiev's secret services of carrying out the car bombing murder of Russian journalist Darya Dugina, the 29-year-old daughter of nationalist philosopher Alexander Dugin.

On Saturday night, Dugina was driving her father's Toyota Land Cruiser about 20 miles outside Moscow when an explosive planted beneath his SUV detonated, the car crashed and was engulfed in flames. She was burned beyond recognition. Her father is thought to have been the ultimate target. Though speculation continues and Kiev denies involvement, the FSB identified their prime suspect as Natalya Vovk, a 43-year-old Ukrainian national.

Moscow alleges Vovk is a member of the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion, a notorious Ukrainian national guard unit. In a statement on Monday, the FSB said the "crime was prepared and committed by Ukrainian special services." Many in the West have said Dugin is Russian President Vladimir Putin's "brain," though the closeness of their relationship is widely disputed. Dugin has been a critic of Putin and feels his policy regarding the West and Ukraine is not strong enough.

The Russian intelligence service says Vovk arrived in Russia late last month with her teenage daughter and rented an apartment in a housing block where Dugina lived. Vovk is accused of working as a contractor for Ukrainian special services, carrying out extensive surveillance on Dugina for almost a month in preparation for the attack, including following her around in a Mini-Cooper with different license plates to avoid being detected.

According to the FSB, Vovk and her daughter attended the family festival outside Moscow Saturday evening where Dugin gave a lecture and Dugina was present. There was reportedly a lax security situation at the festival and no precautions were taken at the parking lot's entrance where Dugin's SUV was parked. Russian investigators said the bomb was planted under Dugin's vehicle on the driver's side. Dugin apparently decided to take a different car, before leaving the event, while Dugina drove off in her father's SUV. The "controlled explosion" was carried out remotely, killing Dugina while she was on the highway, and Vovk fled to Estonia with her daughter on Sunday, the FSB said.

According to a report in RT, the FSB added that “Vovk used a car with a license plate from the Donetsk People’s Republic when entering Russia, but replaced it with a Kazakhstan license plate when driving in Moscow, and a Ukrainian plate when crossing into Estonia.” The intelligence service also published video footage which purports to show Vovk entering Russia, going inside the apartment building where Dugina lived, and hastily exiting the country. It also shows the various license plates on the same car Vovk appears to be driving.

Reportedly, in April a photo ID of Vovk was published on the Russian internet as part of a dox on members of the Azov Battalion. The ID lists Vovk’s surname as Shaban, which is apparently also the name her daughter used when traveling to Russia. On Telegram, the Azov regiment denied any connection with Vovk and said Moscow was lying.

Tass reported that Moscow seeks Vovk’s extradition from Estonia and added her name to Russia’s wanted list. Liisa Toots, a Estonian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said it is not appropriate to discuss whether Vovk entered Estonia by way of Russia. Toots added they can share information on individuals entering and leaving the country “only in cases prescribed by law” and the FSB accusations do not meet the criteria. Estonia’s police and border guard service added they had not received any such request from Russia at this time. Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Ukraine’s President Zelensky, described the FSB’s allegations as “Russian propaganda” and fiction. Kiev further suggested the car bombing was a Russian “false flag” and denied they would have orchestrated the killing because Dugina is a marginal figure.

There is reason to believe Kiev had a role in the attack as unnamed Ukrainian officials, intelligence officers, and special forces sergeants have repeatedly taken credit in the media for multiple sabotage attacks using explosives inside Russia as well as Crimea. Although, this alleged targeted assassination would be a major escalation and Russia has not provided evidence proving Vovk or Ukrainian intelligence is responsible.

In a statement published by the Kremlin, Putin sent his condolences to Dugina’s family saying her murder was a “despicable, cruel crime.” He described Dugina as “a bright, talented person with a real Russian heart – kind, loving, sympathetic and open. A journalist, scientist, philosopher, war correspondent, she honestly served the people, the Fatherland, she proved by deed what it means to be a patriot of Russia.”

According to *Al Jazeera*, during an appearance on Russian television last week, Dugina dubbed the United States “a zombie society” where people oppose Russia but cannot locate it on a map.

by Connor Freeman

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