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<http://www.rsf.org/russie-tv-newsreader-shot-dead-in-russia-07-12-2012,43773.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Russia

Presenter killed

TV newsreader shot dead in Russia's North Caucasus

6 December 2012

Reporters Without Borders is deeply saddened by the murder yesterday of **Kazbek Gekkyev**, a newsreader on the local station of the state broadcaster *VGTRK* in the North Caucasus republic of Kabardino-Balkaria.

"We wish to express our sincerest condolences to Kazbek Gekkyev's family and call for a comprehensive and impartial investigation to be undertaken as soon as possible," the press freedom organization said. "It is vital that there should be an end to the impunity surrounding crimes against those who work in news and information in the Russian Caucasus."

Gekkyev, 28, was shot dead about 9 p.m. on his way home from the television studio in the regional capital, Nalchik. Witnesses said he was walking in the street when a car stopped and two unidentified people got out. They asked if he was the TV presenter Kazbek Gekkyev, and when he confirmed his identity, they fired three shots at him before fleeing. The journalist died at the scene before help arrived.

The police launched an immediate investigation into the killing, which [they believe could be linked to the journalist's work](#). **Lyudmila Kazancheva**, the head of the local *VGTRK* office, said his work did not directly involve sensitive subjects. According to the federal Investigative Committee, there could be a link to threats from radical Islamist groups received by journalists at the TV station. [On 13 February this year, radical Islamists posted a video on the Jamaat Takbir website in which they threatened two newsreaders, Aznor Attayev and Arina Zhiliassova, accusing them of presenting anti-terrorist operations in too positive a light and vowing to "carve the smiles on their faces with a knife".](#)

The North Caucasus is the most dangerous region in Russia for those working in the media as well as for the rest of the civilian population. [On 15 December last year, Khadzhimurad Kamalov, an eminent independent journalist, was shot dead in the Caucasian republic of Dagestan](#). To date there has been no progress in the investigation of that crime. According to the murdered journalist's brother, Magdi-Magomed Kamalov, ["the investigation has been blocked by the Dagestan police"](#). [An open letter has been sent to President Vladimir Putin at the initiative of Russian civil society](#), asking him to ensure the investigation takes place under federal auspices and to stop the murders of journalists from going unpunished.

Click here to read a Reporters Without Borders report on the media in the Russian Caucasus published in October 2011: <http://en.rsf.org/russie-terror-thr...>

Photo: RIA Novosti
