Arkady Babchenko, Russian Journalist, Shot and Killed in Kiev

Arkady Babchenko in 2013. Mr. Babchenko was shot and killed in Ukraine on Tuesday.CreditAlexander Baroshin/Associated Press

Arkady Babchenko in 2013. Mr. Babchenko was shot and killed in Ukraine on Tuesday.CreditCreditAlexander Baroshin/Associated Press

By Andrew Higgins
May 29, 2018

MOSCOW — A Russian journalist who fled his homeland last year to escape a campaign of intimidation that he said "was so personal, so scary that I was forced to flee" was shot and killed on Tuesday in the Ukrainian capital, Kiev.

The killing of the journalist, Arkady Babchenko, a former war correspondent who stirred fury among Russian nationalists with his sharply critical coverage, is the latest in a series of attacks, many of them fatal, on outspoken foes of President Vladimir V. Putin, both inside Russia and beyond.

The Ukrainian police said the journalist was found, bleeding, by his wife in their Kiev apartment building and then rushed by ambulance to a hospital. He died en route from what the police said were multiple gunshot wounds to his back.

Kiev's police chief, Andriy Krishchenko, said on Ukrainian television that "the first and most obvious" reason for the attack was Mr. Babchenko's "professional activities," which included articles and social media posts questioning Russia's seizure of Crimea from Ukraine and Russia's military role in Syria.

The Interior Ministry in Kiev released a sketch of a suspect, describing him as a bearded man 40 to 45 years old.

Anton Gerashchenko, a Ukrainian lawmaker and adviser to the interior minister, said in a Facebook post that the gunman was waiting for the journalist in the stairwell of his apartment building.

Describing Mr. Babchenko as "another martyr for the freedom of Russia and for peace in Ukraine," Mr. Gerashchenko said investigators would examine "the actions of Russian intelligence agencies to get rid of those who are trying to tell the truth."

In Moscow, officials and lawmakers blamed Ukraine for the journalist's murder, summoning a favorite trope of Kremlin propaganda that the country has become a failed state since protesters toppled its pro-Russian president, Viktor F. Yanukovych, in early 2014.

Russia's Investigative Committee, a law enforcement agency, announced that it had started its own criminal investigation, saying that it "is not going to ignore brutal crimes against Russian citizens."

Last summer, an assailant from the Russian region of Chechnya tried to kill Adam Osmayev and his wife, Amina, a couple celebrated in Ukraine and denounced in Russia because of their roles as volunteer fighters against Russian-backed rebels in eastern Ukraine. The plot, which Ukraine attributed to Moscow, went awry after Ms. Okuyeva pulled a gun on the attacker.

A few months earlier, a renegade Russian lawmaker, Denis Voronenkov, who had also fled to Ukraine, saying he feared for his life in Russia, was shot and killed outside a luxury hotel in Kiev. The Ukrainian authorities said he had been murdered on the orders of a Russian crime boss.