

## **Draskovic's Party Charges Serb Secret Police With Assassination Attempt**

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The Serbian Renewal Movement has finally released the evidence behind its claim that the Serbian State Security Service was involved in an attempt to assassinate party leader Vuk Draskovic.

Two months after a truck loaded with sand ploughed into a two-car motorcade carrying Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) party leader Vuk Draskovic, killing everyone bar Draskovic himself, his party has come out with evidence it said can directly link the Serbian secret police with the fatal collision.

The SPO has publicly charged the Serbian State Security Service (SDB) of direct involvement in the October 3 incident on the Ibar motorway near Lazarevac. Four SPO officials were killed. The Serbian authorities have yet to announce who was the registered owner of the truck.

The truck driver fled the scene of the accident. His vehicle crossed the central reservation into the path of the BMW and Audi carrying Draskovic and his colleagues.

The SPO, one of Serbia's leading opposition parties and a former coalition ally of the ruling Serbian Socialist Party, are adamant it was an assassination attempt. In a statement issued on November 20 the SPO said the truck belonged to the SDB and that the authorities were "concealing the facts".

The SPO claims it has information that the truck in question was listed in a special register of vehicles held by the police. Such vehicles are "used for secret tasks such as the assassination against Draskovic," they alleged.

On the day following the accident SDB officials, the SPO alleges, broke into the offices where the archive is kept and removed all records of "the killer truck". The vehicle was registered in this secret list under the number BG 994 704.

Within 24 hours of the accident a senior customs official, Petar Rajic, was found dead. There has been no official statement concerning Rajic's death or the circumstances in which he died. Both the SPO and BETA news agency reports point the finger at "the terrorists of the Serbian SDB".

The SPO claim Rajic was a "key witness" to the accident near Lazarevac. In 1996, Rajic confiscated the truck under customs regulations. A Yugoslav citizen, now living abroad, claims he had tried to import the truck, but Rajic made a decision and "delivered that truck to the SDB for the special register of vehicles."

Draskovic's party has called on police officers, employees of the SDB, the customs service and any citizen who knows something about the 'assassination' to bring their evidence to the SPO as soon as possible. The SPO has offered a "high financial award" for information.

As a senior customs official Rajic was responsible for fighting crime. He was, however, close to the Milosevic regime. Acquaintances often saw him at a private firm in Belgrade, which imports alcohol. The company's owner is on the list of people denied entry to the European Union. Another frequent visitor at the firm was Borislav Milosevic, brother of Slobodan Milosevic.

The SPO has accused General Dragan Ilic, Chief of the Serbian Criminal Police Department, of complicity. The SPO maintain Ilic knew who owned the truck. Ilic's wife is head of the service administering the special register of vehicles.

The SPO also claims that Ilic had heard the same "from several policemen who have talked about the crime and testified about the crime in written statements". These allegations came in response to Ilic's comment that the SPO was using "one traffic accident for the purpose of political advertising".

The Institute for Technical Testing and Technical Sciences completed tests on samples of sand taken from the scene on November 12.

SPO lawyers claim the results indicate the sand was loaded onto the truck in Belgrade, at the Makis sand-producing plant. When the truck collided with the cars at Lazarevac, however, it was travelling back towards Belgrade.

"The killer had support," the leader of the SPO's team of lawyers, Borivoje Borovic, told BCR. "We have four witnesses who claim that they saw the killer jumping out of the truck and getting into a red VW Golf car. A Golf without licence plates was travelling behind the truck."

According to him, witnesses Branko Petrovic and Katarina Milinovic from Lazarevac confirmed this in front of the investigative judge on 10 November.

They saw a red Golf and the truck with sand, parked at a spot, about one kilometer away from the site of the accident, about one hour before the accident took place.

SPO lawyers also claim that two days before the accident a Mercedes truck identical to that involved in the accident was being repaired at a garage on the Ibar motorway. According to the garage owner, the truck belonged to the special state service. SPO lawyers claim this was "the killer truck". The SDB admits to owning such a vehicle but say it was in the garage for repairs and deny it was this vehicle which caused the accident.

Two months into the investigation and not a single question has been answered. Vuk Draskovic, the only witness who survived, was summoned to testify before the investigative judge only after the SPO publicly questioned why he had not been called.

Furthermore the SPO claim that another potential witness, Miroslav Macika, gave them his account on October 20. Macika had testified to the SPO that he and his brother, Branislav, were travelling in a truck directly behind "the killer truck". When called to court, however, Macika unexpectedly denied the account.

Nebojsa Atanackovic, a member of the SPO legal team, attended the court forensic examination of the vehicles on November 8. Atanackovic told journalists that a key chain marked 'Belgrade Brewery (BIP)' was found in the truck. The Macika brothers' father works at BIP. Miroslav also worked for BIP and Branislav drove beer trucks. Miroslav was also charged with armed robbery in 1993 but escaped with a light sentence.

The whole issue has become even more cloudy following a statement by Federal Information Secretary Goran Matic that five suspects had been arrested in Belgrade while preparing to assassinate Milosevic using a truck full of sand.

But the SPO insists that the investigation has led to the door of the SDB. Borovic has raised objections about the work of the investigative judge. "This is proof," Borovic claims, "that where political assassinations are concerned, the courts depend on the authorities".

The SPO also claim that the U.S. and Russian intelligence services know who ordered the assassination of Draskovic.

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**Location:** [Serbia](#)

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