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New arrest for Anna Politkovskaya's murder – step in the right direction

The arrest of a former senior Russian police official in connection with the murder of journalist and human rights defender Anna Politkovskaya in 2006 is a major step forward, Amnesty International said today.

Lieutenant Colonel Dmitry Pavlyuchenkov was arrested on Tuesday on suspicion of organizing the murder of Anna Politkovskaya on 7 October 2006 in Moscow. He had previously been named as a key witness in her case.

Rustam Makhmudov, who was arrested in Chechnya in May 2011, has been charged with her murder. He is the brother of two of the three men acquitted of murdering Anna Politkovskaya in February 2009, following which the Russian Supreme Court sent the case back for further investigation.

For over a decade, Anna Politkovskaya spoke out against human rights violations in Chechnya and the North Caucasus in general.

“The arrest of Dmitry Pavlyuchenkov would appear to be a step in the right direction. The question that remains, however, is how far up the chain the orders came from,” said John Dalhuisen, Europe and Central Asia Deputy Programme Director.

“First those accused of carrying out the murder were arrested. Now we have seen the arrest of a person accused of organising it. But the full truth, and complete justice, will only be delivered once those who ordered it are also identified and convicted.”

Amnesty International urges the Russian authorities to ensure that Dmitry Pavlyuchenkov receives a fair trial in proceedings that meet international standards and that the investigation continues until all those responsible for the murder of Anna Politkovskaya are brought to justice.