

---

## **RUSSIA ST PETERSBURG: 'MILITANTS' KILLED IN COUNTER-TERRORISM RAID**

- 18.08.2016

---

BBC, 18 August 2016

Four suspected militants have been killed in a shoot-out with Russian special forces during a raid on an apartment block in St Petersburg.

Russia's counter-terrorism committee said at least three of the men had been wanted for links to a series of terror attacks and attempted assassinations.

The men were ordered to surrender but killed when they opened fire, according to an official statement.

Russia has long been battling extremism in the North Caucasus.

But the BBC's Moscow correspondent Sarah Rainsford says it is rare that raids against suspected Islamist militants are carried out in St Petersburg.

Three of the men killed were provisionally named by the counter-terrorism committee as Zelim Shebzukhov, Astemir Sheriev and Vyacheslav Nyrov.

The committee said the three had been leaders of a "terrorist underground" active in Kabardino-Balkharia region of the North Caucasus.

The operation unfolded in daylight after security forces surrounded a 16-storey building - heavily armed and in balaclavas. The apartment building was not evacuated but the counter-terrorism committee said no civilians had been injured.

The committee says weapons and explosive devices were found in the apartment but it is unclear whether officers were acting on intelligence about a possible attack.

In a separate incident which also took place on Wednesday, two gunmen wielding firearms and axes attacked traffic police on the Shchelkovskoye highway in Balashikha, 20km (12 miles) east of Moscow.

The men, reportedly from Central Asia, were shot dead but wounded two policemen.

The insurgency in the North Caucasus followed two bitter separatist conflicts in Russia's Chechnya republic and has occasionally spilled over into violence in other parts of Russia.