# Deadly Attack by Islamic Militants in Dagestan Sparks Three-Day Mourning Period



MOSCOW — The Republic of Dagestan, a southern region in Russia, commenced a three-day mourning period following an attack by Islamic militants on Sunday that resulted in the deaths of 20 people, primarily police officers. The assailants targeted Christian and Jewish places of worship in the cities of Makhachkala and Derbent.

The attack is considered the deadliest since the March gunfire at a Moscow concert, which saw 145 fatalities. Officials suspect the North Caucasus branch of the Islamic State, Vilayat Kavkaz, of orchestrating the coordinated assault. Governor Sergei Melikov attributed the violence to Islamic sleeper cells and claimed the attackers aimed to instill fear and link the violence to Moscow's activities in Ukraine.

President Vladimir Putin received updates and efforts are underway to aid the victims. The Investigative Committee reported that all five attackers were killed. Of the 46 injured, 13 were police officers, with four in critical condition. The deceased included Rev. Nikolai Kotelnikov, a 66-year-old Orthodox priest, who was attacked in Derbent.

The assault on Derbent's Kele-Numaz synagogue and various locations in Makhachkala mirrored earlier extremist violence in Dagestan, though such incidents have diminished in recent years. There are ongoing concerns about security and the effectiveness of counterterrorism strategies in the region.