# Deadly Attacks in Dagestan Spark Three-Day Mourning Period



**Russian Region of Dagestan Enters Mourning After Deadly Attacks**

Dagestan, a southern region of Russia, is observing the first of three days of mourning following a series of attacks by Islamic militants that resulted in 19 fatalities, predominantly among law enforcement officers. The coordinated assaults, which occurred on Sunday, targeted religious sites and a police checkpoint in the cities of Makhachkala and Derbent, both located along the Caspian Sea.

Among the victims was Russian Orthodox priest Rev. Nikolai Kotelnikov, whose throat was slit before assailants set his church ablaze. In addition, the Kele-Numaz synagogue in Derbent was similarly attacked. The attackers, armed with rifles and Molotov cocktails, also engaged in shootouts with police officers and targeted other religious institutions in the region.

Governor Sergei Melikov attributed the violence to Islamic “sleeper cells” operating under foreign direction, although no group has claimed responsibility. The attacks follow a pattern of Islamic extremist violence in Dagestan and other parts of Russia, including a devastating attack in March near Moscow claimed by an Islamic State affiliate.

Russian authorities stated that all five attackers involved in the raid were killed. President Vladimir Putin was briefed on the situation, and a criminal investigation under anti-terrorism laws has been launched. Law enforcement agencies are continuing their efforts to identify and apprehend any additional perpetrators.

The three-day mourning period in Dagestan includes the lowering of flags to half-mast and the cancellation of entertainment events. Local officials have pledged support for the families of the victims.