

## Moscow serial killing trial begins

*by UPI*

MOSCOW -- A preliminary hearing was held in Moscow Monday for a man charged with killing 52 people in a city park since 1992. Alexander Pichushkin asked for and was granted a trial by jury for the slayings, which took place in Moscow's forested Bitsa Park. Lead prosecutor Yury Syomin said there were 41 victims and 98 witnesses scheduled to testify at the trial, which he estimated would last two months, the Novosti news agency reported. "We brought accusations against him in 52 murders, although he told us about 63 murders," Syomin said, adding there was no evidence to back up the 11 additional claims. The former supermarket worker had told police during questioning after his June 2006 arrest with each victim, he was getting closer to filling the 64 squares on an imaginary chessboard. Prosecutors allege Pichushkin first killed a schoolboy in the summer of 1992, Itar-Tass reported. All but three of the other alleged victims were male, Novosti said.

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