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## In Amur Region, probe finished into murder of 10-year-old Vera Zakharova



The Amur Region Office of the Investigative Committee has finished the investigation against a 28-year-old resident of the town of Belogorsk. He is charged with crimes under Part 4, item “b” of Article 132 (sexual abuse) – two counts and Part 2, items “c” and “j” of Article 105 of the RF Penal Code (murder).

10-year-old Vera Zakharova went missing on 8 September 2014 on her way back from school. The investigators have done a lot of work to find out the circumstances under which the girl went missing. They searched over 200 different facilities of jousting and utilities, about 200 non-residential buildings, over 500 flats, houses and sheds. Footage of CCTV cameras set on the way the girl took to walk from school to home was confiscated. More than 2,000 people were questioned, including the witnesses who saw the girl that day. A lot of different inquiries were assigned and run. Officers of the local investigative office, Amur Region Office of the Ministry of the Interior, Emergencies Ministry’s Amur Region Office, representatives of organizations, private security companies, officials of the administration, military, personnel of the fire station and volunteers searched the area the girl had been seen last.

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Search dog units combed an area along the Kiryanikha river, streets, abandoned buildings and vacant lots in Amurselmash. Rescuers examined bodies of water in Belogorsk. Requests to find Vera were sent to other regions. Other investigative and search operations were carried out.

In April 2015, some fishermen found a school bag identical to the one the girl had on the day she went missing and visible on the picture of her published in mass media and on leaflets. The bag was hidden in thick grass in a swamp near the town of Belogorsk. The investigative team arrived at the scene immediately, combed the surrounding area and found human remains. A DNA test showed that the remains belonged to Vera Zakharova with probability of 99.9%.

Vera's uncle was arrested on suspicion of the horrible crime and he even confessed to the crime, but then changed his mind, denied his guilt and refused to testify using the right provided by Article 51 of the Russian Constitution.

Although the suspect denied his guilt, the investigators managed to prove his involvement in the crime based on the results of multiple forensic inquiries, including a psychological linguistic one which is used rarely enough. There are 110 files of criminal records and 220 pages of indictment.

The indictment has been approved and soon the case will be referred to court.

*01 September 2016*

*Page address:* <https://en.sledcom.ru/news/item/1064034>