
Chairman of Investigative Committee coordinates work of investigators in mass death of people in Irkutsk



Chairman of the RF Investigative Committee Alexander Bastrykin has arrived in the city of Irkutsk and personally coordinated the work done by investigators to look into the death of people after they drank alcohol-containing substance.

Mr. Bastrykin held a briefing attended by Vice-Chairman of the Investigative Committee Ilya Lazutov, Head of Forensic Directorate of the Investigative Committee Zigmund Lozhis, senior officials of the fifth department of the Investigative Committee's Directorate (based in the city of Novosibirsk), Irkutsk Region office of the Investigative Committee, a team including investigators and criminalists of investigative offices, as well as experienced criminalists and specialists of the Investigative Committee's Central Office.

During the briefing the Chairman heard a report on the progress of the investigation opened in production, storage, selling of goods and products that did not meet safety standards and entailed death of two or more people under part 3 of Article 238 of the RF Penal Code.

According to investigators, from 16 to 20 December 2016, Irkutsk police department received 95 reports on methanol poisoning and found dead bodies of the poisoned. As of now, 55 people are dead and 40 more remain under treatment in hospitals. All the instances of poisoning and death are connected to drinking alcohol-containing haw liqueur intended for taking baths and that contain methanol.

At present, there are 9 people in detention – they are sole proprietors and their employees, selling the said liqueur in small batches and at retail on markets Progress, Privoz, Bakaleya in the city of Irkutsk and other places. The detainees are expecting restraints. According to the detainees, as well as survivors and witnesses, the haw liqueur selling has been going on for a long time now. The liqueur got to sales outlets without any documents and was sold discreetly by word of mouth to be taken as an alcoholic beverage. Nor instances of methanol poisoning have been registered before.

The investigators have conducted 11 searches in sales outlets, more than 90 examinations, assigned some 70 forensic inquiries, including forensic medical, chemical, technical ones and others. More than 100 people have been questioned as witnesses.

In addition, in order to prevent illegal sales of haw liqueur and to reveal wholesale and retail warehouses selling alcohol products, the police have checked more than 1.5 thousand businesses and confiscated more than 6.5 thousand liters of different alcohol-containing products.

Additionally, firms based in the city of Saint Petersburg and the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania mentioned on the labels as the ones producing the haw liqueur are being checked at the moment.

Having looked at the plan of further investigative operations Mr. Bastrykin outlined a number of first-priority tasks and pointed out that legal assessment should be given to actions of not only dealers of the dangerous liqueur, but all those involved in concentrate's making to the market, including suppliers and producers.

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