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## **Another gangster jailed in murder of family in Vladimir**

A court has recognized the evidence gathered by the Vladimir Region Office of the Investigative Committee as sufficient to convict Maksim Meshchankin, 38, a member of an organized armed criminal group (gang) and a native of Vladimir Region. He was found guilty of murder of two or more people with aggravating factors under part 2, items “a”, “g”, “h” of Article 105, banditry under Part 2 of Article 209, illegal circulation of firearms and ammunition under part 3 of Article 222 and deliberate destruction of another’s property under Part 1 of Article 167 of the RF Penal Code.

The court and investigators have revealed that while serving in prison in the early 2000s Meshchankin met Mazur and they remained in contact after they were released. Meshchankin registered in Bryansk Region but often went to visit Mazur in Noginsk.

In 2011, Mazur decided to continue criminal activities and commit contract murders. The first one to be involved in his gang was Smirnov. Aware that his prison crony was serving yet another prison term, counting on his criminal experience, inclinations and passion for easy money, Mazur had waited until Meshchankin got released and the same year involved him in his gang.

According to investigators, in June 2015, the gang leader took an order on killing a resident of the town of Vladimir for a reward of 1 million rubles after the target’s wife had inherited the target’s flat and sold it. In accordance with their roles, Meshchankin and Smirnov scouted the area and the situation for the murder at Vladimir on the night of 11 June 2015. The next morning the accomplices arrived from Noginsk to the target’s house in a car driven by Meshchanikin. He stayed in the car to be on the watch, and when his two accomplices came out the house all three of them took off for Noginsk at once. Aware that his two accomplices had killed the 42-year-old man, his 36-year-old pregnant wife and her 16-year-old son, Meshchankin helped to dump a laptop computer and a phone stolen from the flat in a pond.

The investigators also have irrefutable evidence that Meshchankin was involved in the 2013 hired murder of a 33-year-old local resident in Noginsk. Acting in accord with other gangsters and being aware that the man was an addict, Meshchankin represented himself as a drug control agent, helped to get the victim into a car and was on the lookout during the murder. He then helped to bury the man on a cemetery in somebody’s old grave.

Meshchankin took a cooperation deal and the case against him was tried under a special procedure.

The court has sentenced him to 15 years in a special-security correctional facility.

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On 17 February 2017, Viktor Smirnov who also made a plea bargain, was sentenced to 18 years in prison for several personal and property crimes. The cases against other gangsters, including gang leader 49-year-old Anatoly Mazur, 26-year-old Alexander Raldugin and 47-year-old Galina Bobrova are being tried on courts.

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