

In Volgograd, men charged in gas explosion in house



The Volgograd Region Office of the Investigative Committee continues the investigation in a gas explosion that took down a section of an apartment building and killed several people. By now, the owner of a shop his father and a worker they employed have been charged with execution of work that does not meet safety standards and had entailed death of two or more people under Part 3 of Article 238 of the RF Penal Code.

According to investigators, in May, Yuri Babayan employed 35-year-old local resident Vladimir Leksunkin via a free Internet advertisement website so that he connected the shop owned by his son Yaroslav Babayan to city's water supply networks. To do that the worker had to use special equipment to prick soil under the road in Panfilovskaya Street in Sovetsky District of the city in the direction of a water well located near No 60 in Universitetsky Avenue. The investigators discovered that the said work had not been authorized by Sovetsky District Administration, Volgogradgorgaz or any other controlling bodies.

About 11 AM on 16 May 2017, the said worker was pricking the soil when he damaged a gas pipe and called an emergency team of Volgogradgorgaz who stopped the gas leak by cutting off the supply.

Two hours later, when the team was doing the repairs, there was a gas explosion which took down the third section of No 60 in Universitetsky Avenue. The house had 45 flats occupied by 97 people, according to preliminary data.

Four bodies were found under the debris. One of them was identified as an emergency gas service, the others were residents of the house. The bodies were sent for a postmortem.

At least 11 people, three of them in grave condition were taken to hospital.

All three of the accused were taken in custody pending trial. They do not deny that they were involved in the crime, but do not admit their guilt.

To find out all the circumstances surrounding the crime, the investigators have ordered a number of forensic examinations, including technical, chemical and trace examinations. In addition, forensic medical experts have determined the bodily harm done to each of the explosion-affected people. The investigators are working to collect and document evidence. The investigation is ongoing.

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