
Court rules upon members of Vorkuta criminal gang of Ifa-Kozlov responsible for multiple grave and especially grave offences



The evidence gathered by the Komi Regional Directorate of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation was considered sufficient by the court to convict the participants of Vorkuta criminal organization of Ifa-Kozlov committed numerous grave and especially grave crimes.

In accordance with their roles in the offences, leader of the gang Yury Kozlov and its 19 members were found guilty of creation and operation of a criminal community (Article 210 of the Criminal Code of Russia); creation of a stable armed group (band) with the aim of assaulting individuals (Article 209 of the Criminal Code of Russia); murders and attempts of murder committed by an organized group by a generally dangerous method out of banditry (Article 105 of the Criminal Code of Russia); intentional infliction of a grave injury committed by an organized group (Article 111 of the Criminal Code of Russia); swindling committed by an organized group on an especially large scale (Article 159 of the Criminal Code of Russia); extortion (Article 163 of the Criminal Code of

Russia); arbitrariness (Article 330 of the Criminal Code of Russia); illegal transfer of firearms (Article 222 of the Criminal Code of Russia); etc.

The total of 29 persons was investigated in the probe. With respect to the five participants, having agreed upon pre-trial deals, the court has already issued convictions. Four more (Oleg Ifa, one of the leaders, and three active members of the criminal organization) are on the international wanted list, a preventive measure in the form of detention is in absentia chosen in respect of them.

The investigators and the court have determined that the crime organisation consisting of former law enforcement officers, sportsmen, war veterans and other townsmen was created in Vorkuta in the 1990s. At the source of it were Vladimir Ifa and Yury Kozlov. In 1997, after Vladimir's death, his brother Oleg Ifa became the leader of the gang. At the initial stage the participants of the group (at least as much as 20 people) directed by its leaders extorted money from entrepreneurs under the threat of violence and destruction of or damage to their property. By the beginning of 2000s the number of gang members increased to 50. A certain hierarchy was formed, with strict discipline maintained and any deviation from the established rules severely punished, all the participants must have followed the guidelines for security and conspiracy. The so-called "stash" was created, to which the money gained from criminal activity were sent.

The group was well-armed. In Vorkuta and Syktyvkar the investigators have found numerous "caches" with military-grade firearms, ammunitions, explosive substances and devices, specifically 11 Kalashnikov assault rifles of various modifications, more than 50 pistols, six carbines and rifles, sawed-off shotguns, two self-made explosive devices, four grenade launching and flame throwing complexes, several thousand bullets of various calibres, grenades (including one anti-tank) and anti-personnel mines. One of the "caches" was mined.

In the course of this probe the charges of committing 12 murders and murder attempts as well as two cases of taking hostages were brought against the gang members. They dispatched dangerous competitors – members of other crime organisations, and participants of their own gang which, according to the leaders, deserved punishment for their transgressions.

For instance, in April 1999, an entrepreneur Anatoly Kharuk was murdered and his bodyguard assaulted under the orders from Yury Kozlov, who at that time was in custody. The murder was prepared by an organised group of seven gang members. For a month the perpetrators watched the businessman's movements, bought clothes and arms for the crimes. On April 18, 1999, Rafael Mamedov and Sergey Bondar dressed as law enforcement officers and armed with home-made submachine guns committed an armed assault on the entrepreneur and his bodyguard who were at that moment playing football at a sports complex. The attackers shot the victims many times (72 bullets and shell casings were found at the crime scene). Due to numerous penetrating gunshot wounds the entrepreneur died, and his bodyguard received grievous bodily harm but survived. The attackers fled the scene in the car of their accomplice.

In January 2002, an assault on a Vorkuta entrepreneur and the gang's main business competitor Alexander Agadzhanyan and an active member of his crime group Vadim Shishov was committed. The gang had information that Agadzhanyan and Shishov had been personally involved into the death of a gang member Alexander Mozhaev who had been killed in October 2001, near the building of the Vorkuta Mining Institute. Implementing a criminal scheme, Konstantin Spirin and Konstantin Medvedev created a self-made explosive device consisting of at least one MON-50 anti-personnel mine and put it into a VAZ-2105 car, which they left near the "Shakhter" ("Miner") sports complex. On January 21, 2002, when the victims were going to the entrance to sports complex, the self-made explosive device was activated using a remote controller. The explosion resulted in Agadzhanyan and Shishov receiving bodily injuries from which they died in the hospital. In addition, severe bodily harm was inflicted to two men and one woman who were in close vicinity to the car.

In November 2004, the members of the gang committed the murder of Ilfat Shagivaliev. Perpetrators planned that by kidnapping and holding the man hostage they will put pressure to his brother Azat Shagivaliyev, a leader of conquering gang, living in Moscow at that time and force him to come to Vorkuta where they would execute him (Ifa-Kozlov gang believed that Azat Shagivaliev with Vladimir Alexandrov (member of Shagivalievskie gang) murdered Vladimir Ifa and his wife in 1997 in Moscow). For this purpose the perpetrators enticed Ilfat who was dealing with furniture shipment to garage premise of café "Secret" located in Komsomolskiy village and strangled him with a rope once they understood that their plan failed. They transported his body to an auto route leading to a heating plant of Komsomolskaya mine.

In April 2005 they executed a member of Shagivalievskie gang Vladimir Alexandrov in the same garage. The members of the gang wanted to kill Alexandrov and Azat Shagivaliev in April 2004 but they stayed alive after activation of an explosive device in a car and received injuries of various severity.

Several murders were committed on the sixth floor of Vorkuta central welfare house - the main meeting point of Ifa-Kozlov gang.

The gang was financed by profit from racketeering, prostitution, firearms, explosive substances and devices. Millions of roubles were received from stock swindling and reselling of property arrested by bailiffs and acquired at low costs. The money obtained by illegal activities was legalised by trade organizations, entertainment venues, hotels, pharmacies, etc.

Investigative activities for investigation of this probe (search and seizing activities, identifications, and interrogations) were carried out in cities of Moscow and Saint Petersburg and in Moscow, Leningrad, Tver, Kirov, Yaroslavl, Nizhny Novgorod, Kaluga, Saratov, Rostov, Belgorod, Kursk, Voronezh, Tambov and Krasnodar regions.

Money and property of the perpetrators of total value of over 200 million roubles was arrested by court upon investigative request. The probe amounted to more than 340 volumes.

Crimes of the gang were successfully detected and solved due to consistent interaction between investigation and police operative units, mutual exchange of information, thoughtful approach to investigation and initiative of the investigators.

Tedious work of investigation, thorough collecting of information, carefully planned operations of “pulling out” of elements and perpetrators possessing necessary information from the system of vertical and horizontal links and their implementation led the seemingly fine system of criminal hierarchy to fall down in pieces.

The court sentenced: Yury Kozlov and Denis Armyakov to a life sentence in a special-regime penal colony and to paying fines of 1.5 and 1.2 million roubles respectively; the other perpetrators to imprisonment from 7 to 25 years in a strict-regime penal colony and to paying fines from 500,000 to one million roubles.

Изображения



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