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## Probe into Alexey Kuznetsov completed



The Main Directorate on Major Crimes Investigation of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation has finished the criminal investigation into former Deputy Governor of Moscow Region Alexey Kuznetsov. He is charged with commitment of offences under Articles 159, 174.1, and 160 of the Criminal Code of Russia (swindling; legalization of amounts of money acquired by a person as the result of the committed offence; embezzlement). Previously, he was extradited by relevant authorities of the French Republic.

By deceit and abuse of trust, participants of the organized group led by Alexey Kuznetsov and his First Deputy Valery Nosov had acquired the rights for other people's property in the form of the right to claim debts for indicated services from Moscow Region municipalities, from Moscow Region public utilities municipal unitary enterprises, and legalized the acquired amounts of money. The damage inflicted by the illegal actions of the convicts to the Moscow Region budget exceeds 14 billion rubles.

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The money had been legalized through fake deals with various legal entities controlled by members of the organized group, with accounts in a bank controlled by Kuznetsov and his accomplices. For instance, the stolen money had been transferred to accounts of non-resident companies registered in the offshore zone of the Republic of Cyprus. It had been spent on elite real estate objects in Switzerland and France, high-value cars, and other assets. The indicated offences had been committed in 2005-2008.

During investigative activities in Russia, the Investigative Committee discovered antiquities of artistic and historical value that Kuznetsov's ex-wife Janna Bullock tried to smuggle to the Republic of Finland. These assets amount to 1,357 items, including print media, books, paintings, furniture, interior design items, coins, armor, and other valuable property. All of those were arrested to be forfeited and returned to the state and to compensate for the damage of the victims.

Several Kuznetsov's accomplices have been already brought to justice: Valery Nosov, Vladislav Telepnev, and Elena Kuznetsova are serving sentences in places of deprivation of liberty by court sentences. Janna Bullock was sentenced in absentia. She was found guilty of swindling and legalization of money and other assets acquired by a person in an illegal way. The probe into Bullock was processed separately. She is hiding in the USA and the relevant officials of this country have reported on the impossibility of her extradition due to a lack of extradition treaty with Russia. Therefore, the trial was held in her absentia.

The real opportunity to bring Alexey Kuznetsov to justice is a natural result of the effective cooperation between the Investigative Committee of Russia and the relevant authorities of the French Republic. In 2013, Chairman of the Investigative Committee Alexander Bastrykin had discussed the matters of criminal proceedings against Kuznetsov in person with French law enforcement officers. Thereafter, the French criminal police had promptly identified the location of the convict and arrested him. The extradition process to come after that can be literally called unprecedented. With due regard for the French legislation features, the process took several years. However, the uniqueness of this procedure is not only in its timeline but in the fact that the direct cooperation between French relevant officials and representatives of the Russian investigation managed to dispel any doubts the extraditing party might have had about the legitimacy of criminal proceedings against Kuznetsov and circumstances of crimes he was involved in.

Thereafter, the High Court of Paris ruled to arrest hotels in Courchevel, pieces of art, and other property belonging to the perpetrators. Moreover, as a result of cooperation with foreign relevant authorities, the investigation managed to gather enough evidence including this to establish what the money obtained by illegal activities had been spent on.

The investigation gathered enough evidence; therefore, the criminal case with the approved indictment was sent to the court to be tried on the merits.

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