
In Tomsk Region, members of an organized group are charged in a probe involving timber smuggling



Investigating bodies of the West Siberian Transport Investigations Directorate of the Investigative Committee of Russia have brought charges against local residents and a foreign national for committing a crime under Part 3 Article 226.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (smuggling of strategically important resources by an organized group). The probe was initiated based on the materials of operational and search activities of the Siberian operational customs and the Federal Security Service Tomsk Regional Directorate.

According to the investigation, in 2018-2019, residents of Tomsk Region and a citizen of the Republic of Uzbekistan created an organized group, which committed in Tomsk and Bely Yar, Tomsk Region, crimes related to illegal logging, harvesting, processing and transfer of timber (industrial wood) through the customs border of the Customs Union within the EurAsEC.

So, in 2018, in the village of Bely Yar of Tomsk Region, the defendants decided to carry out illegal clean felling of commercial timber under the guise of sanitary cutting in the territory of the Verkhneketskoye forestry of Tomsk Region for export outside the Russian Federation. One of the defendants preselected the forest plantations known to him and reached an agreement with the chief forester of the Verkhneketsky forestry of the Druzhnensky local forestry in Tomsk Region on their joint trip to the Orlovskoye Urochishche of the Verkhneketsky forestry to determine the boundaries of the clean felling and carry it out under the guise of a sanitary one.

In the period from May to November 2018, the chief forester of the Verkhneketskoye forestry of the Druzhnenskoye local forestry in Tomsk Region, using his official position, organized and ensured the preparation of five fictitious acts of forest pathology surveys of forest stands, on the basis of which the defendants subsequently organized illegal cutting, harvesting, processing and smuggling of timber using forged documents and information about the origin of the goods, as well as indicating inaccurate information about transactions with wood, the manufacturer of timber and their value through controlled commercial organizations in the customs declarations for the goods.

These actions of the group's participants caused damage to the forest fund of the Russian Federation in the amount of more than 400 mln rubles.

In December 2019, as part of the operational and search measures conducted by officers of the Federal Security Service of Russia in Tomsk Region, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation in Tomsk Region, the Siberian Operational Customs, and the General Department of Anti-Smuggling of the Federal Customs Service of Russia, the criminal activity of the defendants was stopped.

During the investigation, 5 active members of the organized group were detained. Upon investigative motion, the court ruled to put three of them in custody and sentenced the rest of them to house detention.

At present, investigators are carrying out a set of required investigative activities aimed to establish all the circumstances of the incident. The criminal investigation is ongoing.

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