
Sentence imposed over a boat station director under a probe into death of 11 persons as a result of an incident near Volgograd banks



The evidence collected by the Main Investigative Department of the Investigative Committee of Russia was found by court to be sufficient to sentence the owner of a boat station Pristan LLC Leonid Zhdanov over a probe into death of 11 persons as a result of collision of a catamaran and a barge on the Volga River in June 2018. He was found guilty of committing an offence under Part 3 of Article 238 of the Criminal Code of Russia (rendering of services that do not meet safety standards entailing by negligence death of two or more persons).

The court sentenced him to 4 years of suspended imprisonment with deprivation of the right to practice auxiliary activities related to water transport for 2 years.

The investigation and the court established that in the afternoon of June 11, 2018, Dmitry Khakhalev, not having navigation skills and a license to operate a small vessel "Yelan 12", went on the water of the Volga River near the city of Volgograd with 15 passengers on board. While intoxicated, Khakhalev collided with the tugboat Kapitan Vecherkin. As a result of the collision, the

vessel steered by Khakhalev sank, 10 passengers and Khakhalev died from drowning on the spot, 5 passengers were rescued by the tugboat crew, three of them were injured, which did not cause any harm to their health.

In addition, it was found that a month before the tragedy on April 29, 2018 at the same boat station there were similar events, when Pavel Epifanov, being intoxicated, as a boat driver, freely entered the water at night on an unregistered small vessel - motorboat "Progress-4" with 4 passengers on board. The boat capsized while turning, endangering the lives of its passengers. They were saved by another small vessel. The investigators established that Epifanov had no navigation skills and no license to operate a small vessel. In addition, the situation was made possible, among other things, due to the lack of control over the departure of small vessels and their return to the base by Zhdanov. In addition, the evidence gathered by the Investigative Committee was considered by the court as sufficient to convict in February 2021 the senior state inspector of the central branch of the State Inspectorate of Small Vessels (SMI) SU MOE Volgograd Region Sergey Petrov and state inspector of the same department Elena Belyakova under Paragraph C of Part 3 of Article 286 of the Criminal Code (abuse of authority entailing grave consequences).

The investigation and the court found that in May 2017 Petrov and Belyakova carried out a technical inspection of the floating base of LLC Prystan in the city of Volgograd. In that, despite violations in the organization of work that prevented its safe operation, but an act of no violations was drawn up. Subsequently, there was no control over the work of the base by the SMI, and in April 2018 Belyakova, on behalf of Petrov, repeatedly made a similar act without a visit to conduct control activities. As a result, the director of the floating base Leonid Zhdanov provided private individuals with paid services for storage of small vessels and organization of their access to the water, ignoring the requirements of the relevant rules. Thus, unregistered vessels were stored and operated on the territory of the base: the motorboat Progress-4 and the floating dacha Elan 12. Petrov and Belyakova didn't take any measures to suspend the operation of the base despite the violations.

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