
A Sentence Has Been Passed in a Criminal Case on the Death of People in an Accident at the Severnaya Mine in the Komi Republic



The evidence collected by the Main Investigative Department of the IC of Russia was recognized by the court as sufficient for sentencing 11 defendants in the criminal case of explosions in the mine tunnels of the Severnaya mine in the city of Vorkuta, the Komi Republic. As a result of this incident, a total of 36 people died, another 17 received injuries of varying severity. The death toll includes employees of the Vorkutaugol coal mining enterprise and mine rescuers. Ten defendants have been found guilty of committing a crime under Part 3 of Article 217 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (violation of industrial safety requirements at hazardous production facilities, which negligently entailed the infliction of grievous bodily harm and major damage, as well as the death of two or more persons), one more defendant has been accused under Part 3 of Article 293 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (negligence resulting in the death of two or more persons and causing particularly large damage).

The list of accused includes Denis Paykin, First Deputy CEO and Technical Director of Vorkutaugol; Oleg Babichenko, Assistant Director for Labor Protection of the Vorkutaugol Executive Office; employees of the Severnaya Mine of Vorkutaugol: Mikhail Timofeev, head of the mine; Oleg Kondratyuk, head of the coal mining section No. 12; Vladislav Akinichev, head of the aerological safety section; his deputies Andrey Plakhov and Alexander Khalichenko; wireman Denis Fedyukov; Leonid Lobkov, commander of the militarized mine rescue detachment; his assistant Oleg

Budaev; Pavel Maslov, chief state inspector of the Vorkuta Territorial Department of the Pechora Department of Rostekhnadzor.

The investigation and the court have established that on February 25 and 28, 2016, explosions of a methane-air mixture occurred in the mine workings of the Severnaya coal mine in the Komi Republic. Violations of industrial safety requirements at hazardous production facilities that caused the tragedy were systemic in nature and continued for several years.

The incident was the result of the desire of the company's management to reach the coal mining targets and thereby avoid penalties from higher executives. With the knowledge of Timofeev, Babichenko, Akinichev, Kondratyuk, Plakhov and Khalichenko, safety requirements related to the ventilation of mine workings were systematically violated. At the same time, the coal mining process was not suspended, which led to the gas contamination of the workings and the mined-out space of the mine. As a result of Fedyukov's purposeful intervention in the air-gas control system, the function automatically turning off electricity when the concentration of methane in the mine workings increases was disabled. The need for forced weakening of the roof was also ignored, which led to its hanging and collapse, subsequent damage to mining equipment, short circuit, ignition and explosion of the methane-air mixture. Maslov's duties included supervision over compliance with industrial safety requirements at the Severnaya mine, which was not actually carried out. As a result of a systemic violation of safety rules, the first explosion occurred, resulting in the death of 30 people.

After the mine rescue operation, Budaev and another of the defendants, in the presence of Lobkov, on February 27, 2016, sent mine rescuers and employees of Vorkutaugol to the mine workings to carry out work to eliminate the accident. At the same time, they knew for certain that the presence of people in the mine was dangerous, and a new explosion was possible. Paykin, as a technical director of a coal-mining organization, seeing such violations of safety requirements, did not remove the head of the accident elimination operation; did not appoint a new one, and in fact withdrew from his duties. On the night of February 28, a new explosion occurred killing 6 and injuring 6 people.

By a court verdict, Paikin was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison, Babichenko and Timofeev were sentenced to 4 years 8 months, Akinichev and Kondratyuk were sentenced to 4.5 years, Maslov was sentenced to 4 years, Plakhov was sentenced to 3 years, Khalichenko was sentenced to 2 years 10 months, Fedyukov was sentenced to 3.5 years. They will serve their sentence in a penal colony settlement. Lobkov and Budaev were sentenced to 2.5 years of probation. Court decisions with regard to three more defendants, two of whom have died, will be made later.

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