
On the course of investigation into the abduction and murder of a human rights activist Natalia Estemirova

The General Investigative Office for North-Caucasian Federal District of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation continues investigation into the abduction and murder of a human rights activist Natalia Estemirova.

During the investigation the version of abduction and murder of Estemirova by Alkhazur Bashayev and other members of the gang of Islam Uspakhadzhiyev has found objective grounds. The investigation believes that the motive was to revenge Estemirova's publications in media about Bashayev's recruiting of gunmen and attack on a businessman's family, as well as her efforts to discredit the state authorities of the Chechen Republic.

As the investigation implies it, 15 July 2009 early in the morning Bashayev together with other members of the gang, drove the car VAZ-2107 to the Estemirova's house at Bogdan Khmel'nitsky Street in Grozny. He waited until the victim came out of the house, abducted her and took away to the Republic of Ingushetia. The same day Bashayev killed Estemirova near the village Gazi-Yurt of Nazranovsky district of Ingushetia.

The investigation has collected enough evidence to prove Bashayev's guilt in Estemirova's murder, therefore the court has made a decision to persecute him as the accused of crimes under part 2, article 208, paragraphs "a, b, r" part 2, article 126, paragraphs "b, ж" part 2, article 105, part 2, article 222 of the Russian Criminal Code (participation in illegal armed formation, kidnapping, murder, arms trafficking). Bashayev is put on the International wanted list and on the investigation's petition the court has in absentia made a decision to take him in custody.

A lot of work has been made in this criminal case. More than 1000 people have been interrogated as witnesses, including those among Estemirova's friends and acquaintances, people she had contacted, employees of different organizations and law enforcement bodies. 83 forensic enquiries have been performed, 380 appeals and enquiries have been sent to law enforcement bodies and human rights organizations, more than 1000 applications from individuals and organizations have been considered. In September 2010 a request of legal assistance was sent to a competent body in the French Republic but the answer has not been received so far.

At present the investigators believe it is not time to reveal the evidence they have, as it may cause a serious damage to the results of the investigation and endanger some members of criminal procedure.

However, it is necessary to point out that the evidence obtained by the investigators proves Bashayev's involvement in Estemirova's murder. Some media statements on his not being implicated in the crime are based not on the facts, but are personal opinions of those who does not have any competence, relevant information and access to all files of this criminal case.

Due to the necessity of planned investigations the preliminary investigation is prolonged for 28 months, that is until 15 November 2011.

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