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## **Preliminary hearing of case against former Head of Main Military Medical Department of Defense Ministry and his deputy will take place in Moscow**

Today the Moscow district military court will hold a preliminary hearing of a case against former Chief of the Main Military Medical Directorate of the Russian Defense Ministry, Director of Kirov Military Medical Academy Major General of Medical Service Alexander Belevitin and his Deputy, Head of the Department Colonel of Medical Service Alexey Nikitin. They are charged with the crimes under part 3 of article 285 (abuse of official powers), paragraphs “a”, “d” of part 4 of article 290 of the RF Criminal Code (bribe-taking by a group of persons in a preliminary conspiracy and on a large scale). Belevitin is also charged with a crime stipulated in part 1 of article 222 of the RF Criminal Code (illegal storage of ammunition).

Main Military Investigation Directorate of the RF Investigative Committee has been running a preliminary investigation into the case during 10 months. Over this time the investigators have conducted about 100 interrogations, around 30 expert examinations among them: handwriting, forensic, phonoscopic, complex commission medical technical and economic legal inquiries. Specialists of famous companies such as Philips Medical Systems, Siemens AG, General Electric were employed to assist examinations.

Given the resistance during the whole progress of the investigation, military investigators along with law-enforcement agents had to conduct more than 10 searches in different places at a time to avoid suppression of evidence. Belevitin and Nikitin were put into custody to prevent them from pressuring on witnesses and other participants of the case. It should also be noted that Belevitin intentionally lingered to familiarize himself with the files of the case. He made 20-30 pages a day which eventually could have taken up to 8 months to finish the files. Therefore the investigator requested the court to limit the time for reading the files for the accused and his defense counselor. The request was upheld.

Laborious and determined work of the investigators resulted in 54 volumes of the criminal case which were sent to the court.

According to investigators' version, the defendants took a bribe of 180 thousand euros, about 7 million rubles at the time, from representatives of two commercial organizations for assisting in getting government contracts for delivery of CAT scanners for the Defense Ministry. Experts assess that under the government contracts worth total of 187 million rubles the medical equipment was

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overpriced which entailed more than 51 million rubles damage to the state.

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