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## Case against Tsapok's gang to be completed

I consider it necessary to make a few notes in connection with numerous publications in media commenting on the too lenient verdict for Sergey Tsepovyaz.

First of all, this too lenient in the authors' opinion verdict was passed by the court. And this is the court and not the investigation that determines the punishment. Concerning the qualification of the crime by Tsepovyaz, indeed, the investigators, probing into this complicated case, have concluded that Sergey Tsepovyaz wasn't member of the gang led by Tsapok, had not committed murders and had not joined the assault on the Ametovs' house. The investigation clearly found that on 8 November 2010, Tsepovyaz, being the deputy director of OOO Arteks-Agro (LC) had burned documents confirming the purchase by a gang member the fuel that had been used to burn down the Ametovs' house. This way, the actions by Tsepovyaz were qualified under article 316 of the Russian Criminal Code (concealment of a crime that was not promised in advanced). The article provides for the punishment of up to 200 thousand rubles of fine or up to 6 months of arrest or up to 2 years in prison. I should remind, that during the investigation, Tsepovyaz was taken into custody and during 8 months he was kept in a pre-trial prison. This preventive punishment was changed only after it was proven that he had no part in murders. Besides, due to the changes made in December 2011 to the Russian Criminal Code – a person who has committed a light-harm crime for the first time can only be punished by the prison in case of aggravating circumstances. Tsepovyaz fully admitted his guilt in concealment of especially grave crime and requested the court to try his case on special conditions. The court took into consideration all above mentioned circumstances and decided on this very verdict.

The agitation about this sentence is probably connected with the fact that the last name of Tsepovyaz is associated by many with the person bearing the same last name as Sergey – Vyacheslav Tsepovyaz, who, in the opinion of the investigators, was indeed one of the members of the Tsapok's gang. The investigators charged V. Tsepovyaz with membership in the Tsapok's gang, attempted murders, murders, swindling, unlawful possession of property, arbitrariness and other crimes (part 2 of article 209, part 4 of article 159, part 1 of article 30, paragraphs "a, e, g, h" of part 2 of article 105, part 4 of article 166, part 2 of article 330, part 3 of article 3, paragraphs "a, f, g, h" of part 2 of article 105, part 2 of article 167 and part 3 of article 222 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code). At present, V. Tsepovyaz, as other members of the gang – I. Chernykh, A. Alekseev, V. Zaporozhets, N.V. Tsapok and of course the leader Sergey Tsapok are reading the files of the case. In the near future the addused will appear in the court and will answer for all the points of the charges in especially grave crimes. These articles provide for the strictest punishment up to life in prison. In addition the cases against three more participants – Y. Gurov, A. Gurov and V. Skachedub – were separated from

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the main case. They were not members of the gang and are charged with a number of crimes non-related to the activity of the gang.

I would also like to say, that the slaying of 12 people in the village of Kushchevskaya, that shocked the whole country, was committed in not obvious circumstances and I should remind that thanks to the professional work of investigators of SK and field officers of Interior Ministry it was possible in short time to identify and detain not only perpetrators and participants of this bloody massacre on 4 November 2010, but to identify and prosecute all members of the gang, which, as was established by the investigators, accounts for a number of other especially grave crimes, including 7 murders, committed during several years not only in Kushchevskaya village, but in other regions as well.

I would like to remind, that two members of the gang – A. Bykov and V. Ryabtsov – who, according to investigators, did not murdered people in the Ametovs' house have already been sentenced to 20 years in prison each. Now, I believe, all of us should wait for the court's decision in respect of other members of the gang and its leader and their punishment.

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