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## **Investigation of criminal case against members of Tsapki gang accused of killing 12 people in Kushchevskaya village and other crimes finished**

North Caucasus Federal District Main Investigations Directorate of Russia's Investigative Committee has finished investigation of a criminal case over murder of 12 people in Kushchevskaya village and over a number of other crimes committed by a so called Tsapki gang.

Six members of the criminal group in accordance with crimes committed by each of them are charged with participation in a gang, murders, attempted murders, robberies, unlawful deprivation of liberty, deliberate destruction and damaging other's property, rapes and illegal storage of weapons.

The evidence collected by investigators shows that it was Sergey Tsapok who was a leader of the gang that acted in the village of Kushchevskaya of Krasnodar Territory for more than 10 years. Investigators believe that Tsapok accounts for 18 murders at least and some of the victims were underage. Vyacheslav Tsepovyaz, who is confused by many with the earlier convicted Sergey Tsepovyaz, is charged with 9 articles of Criminal Code. These are grave and especially grave crimes against a person, property and public security. There are also Vladimir Alexeyev, Igor Chernykh, Vladimir Zaporozhets and uncle of the gang's leader Nikolai Tsapok among the suspects, each of whom accounts for between 3 and 20 grave crimes.

In all, over the time the Tsapok's gang acted in Kushchevskaya – from 1998 to 2010 – its members killed 19 people and two murders were not finished, as in one case the victim received timely medical treatment and in the other the victim managed to escape.

To reveal and collect evidence of involvement of gang members in these especially grave crimes, investigators had to do a lot of work in Rostov Region, Krasnodar Territory, Republic of North Ossetia-Alania and other subjects of the Russian Federation. Investigators have carried out more than 2,000 interrogations, more than 50 examinations of incident scenes and areas, more than 80 on-the-spot check of testimonies, more than 600 forensic examinations, examined more than 8,000 objects and documents, received 70 samples for comparison study and gave more than 250 instructions to inquiry bodies. There 477 volumes of criminal case files. It should be noted that two members of the gang Sergey Karpenko and Vitaly Ivanov killed themselves during preliminary investigation. Two more – Andrey Bykov and Vyacheslav Ryabtsev have already been sentenced to 20 years of jail each.

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Investigators have collected sufficient evidence therefore the case with the approved by the Deputy Prosecutor-General of the Russian Federation indictment has been sent to the court to be tried on the merits.

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