
On the course of a criminal investigation of the events in South Ossetia in August 2008

The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation continues a criminal investigation of the events in South Ossetia in August 2008. The term of investigation has been extended to February 8, 2013. A considerable amount of investigative and other procedural actions has been conducted under this criminal case. The total amount of the criminal case is more than 400 volumes.

The investigators have carried out thorough examinations of the scenes, interviewed thousands of witnesses, victims and professionals, performed nearly 600 forensic examinations and other investigative activities, as the results of which irrefutable evidence was obtained to confirm the involvement of senior officials of Georgia and military commanders of the Georgian law enforcement agencies of various levels in crimes against peace and human security in the territory of the Republic of South Ossetia in August 2008. Based on the totality of the evidence collected, the nature and location of damage, the findings of numerous examinations, their careful analysis and comparison it has been reliably established that the firing of a peacekeeping battalion was made of heavy offensive weapons and carried out from the settlements of Georgia, and it was not somehow provoked or caused.

In addition, when verifying claims of Georgian citizens under a criminal case the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation has studied very carefully a version about the allegedly illegal actions of the Russian service members in Georgian settlements. However, this version was not confirmed. These conclusions are confirmed by the testimony of more than 2 000 members of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation questioned as witnesses and victims, the study of staff, operational and other official documents of more than 50 Russian military units that participated in the operation to force Georgia to peace. Also 100 residents of South Ossetia of both Ossetian and Georgian ethnic groups have been questioned, who argue that the Russian service members were not involved in illegal activities, but on the contrary, prevented looters to commit arsons and loots. The Georgian authorities, to whom Russian investigators have repeatedly sent requests, also could not present evidence of crimes by the Russian service members.

In addition, the investigators have established the facts to confirm the actions of the Georgian authorities aimed at discrediting the Russian army. Thus, the investigators received testimony of persons who worked in the illegally elected government of Dmitry Sanakoev that after the Russian army began to displace the Georgian troops from Tskhinvali and surrounding villages, the Georgian government took actions on discrediting the members of the Russian Armed Forces and creating a

negative image of the Russian soldier. Thus, the dead bodies of Georgian soldiers were disguised in civilian clothes in order to create photo and video footage of alleged substantial civilian casualties among the Georgian citizens. The testimony of witnesses was obtained that prior to the entry of Russian troops in Gori and other towns on the border with Georgia, Ukrainian contractors dressed in the form of the Russian army participated in creating photo and video footage of the alleged acts of violence and looting of Russian soldiers against the civilian population in Georgian villages, to promote and to mislead people in Georgia and the international community.

Based on the fact that senior officials of Georgia and military chiefs of Georgian law enforcement agencies of various levels, guilty of these crimes cannot be brought to trial in the Russian Federation in accordance with international law and Georgia refuses to try them on the Georgian territory, the Russian authorities are taking steps to initiate the inquiry procedure at the International Criminal court. The subject of formal investigation of crimes committed by Georgia by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court could be evidence of an armed attack on Russian peacekeepers and the use of heavy indiscriminate weapons against the civilian population of South Ossetia established by Russian investigators. The Russian investigators have recently sent additional information with the reasons that hinder the implementation of justice to the prosecutor's office in order to prompt the engagement of the International Criminal Court mechanisms.

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