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## **Hearings start in Novosibirsk over criminal case against Solodkins father and son**

Today Novosibirsk Region court starts hearing the case against fitness and sports chief expert of the Novosibirsk Region Administration Alexander Naumovich Solodkin, Novosibirsk Deputy Mayor Alexander Alexandrovich Solodkin, Deputy Head of the Novosibirsk Region Department of Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation Andrey Andreyev. They are charged with membership in a criminal organization Trunovskaya group led by Alexander Trunov and acted in 1992-2009 in Novosibirsk Territory.

The crimes committed by father and son Solodkins were not solved for a long time. This was explained by their tremendous influence in the city of Novosibirsk by virtue of their positions. Besides, everybody was aware of the close connection between them and Trunov's gang. This criminal community was the largest in the region and its members enjoyed extensive authority in criminal circles.

Occupying different positions senior Solodkin influenced the activity of business entities of the city having opportunity to redistribute flows of funds. Sometime later junior Solodkin also started to use his official position as Novosibirsk Deputy Mayor to enrich the criminal group.

At first the victims were reluctant to co-operation with investigators, as they feared to be murdered. But after the investigation was taken up by Siberian Federal District Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee it was possible to restore the picture of many crimes. Victims started to testify, persuaded that the Investigative Committee was intended to investigate the case impartially and take it to the court. Moreover, even some of the gangsters under the pressure of evidence and admitting the hopelessness of avoiding investigation, agreed to co-operate. Pre-trial deals were concluded with them, which eventually made a great help to prove the accused guilty of the crimes.

During the investigation over 500 witnesses were questioned, more than 100 seizures and searches were conducted and more than 200 examinations carried out. Investigators believe that this evidence should suffice to find the Solodkins guilty of all 12 crimes. In addition, to repay the damage caused by the Solodkins' criminal activity, investigators arrested their property worth more than 90 million rubles. There are flats, expensive cars, large sums of money and securities. If the Solodkins are found guilty, these assets will repay the damage to 17 victims.

Criminal case against Trunov and other members of criminal organization was forwarded to court in

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November 2011 and by now it being considered.

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