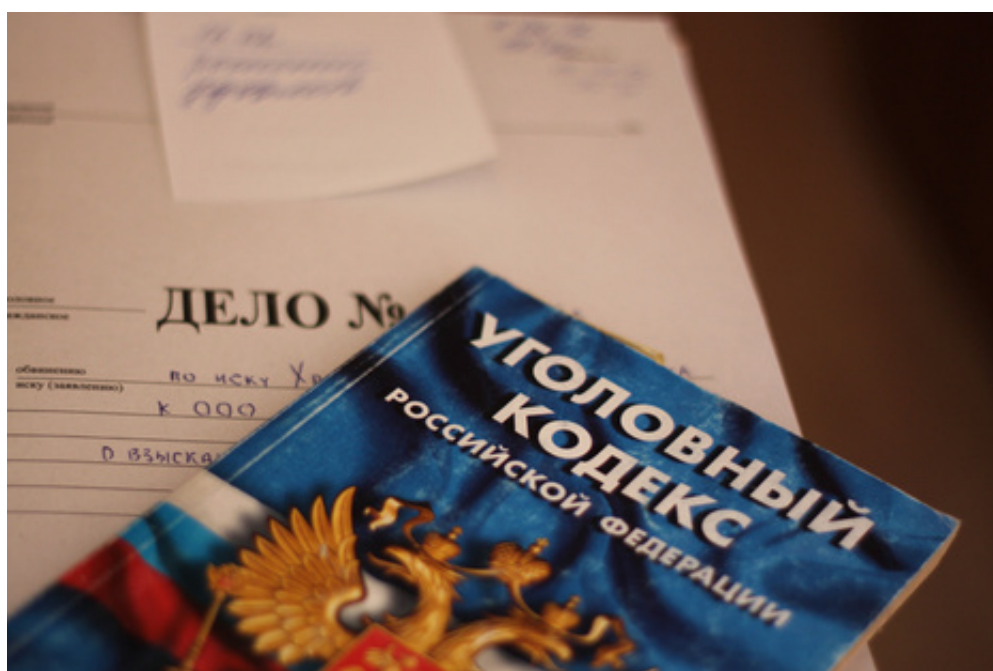

Criminal case against former head of Engels district of Saratov Region Mikhail Lysenko and members of the gang organized by him forwarded to court



Main Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee under conditions of organized resistance of interested persons has finished investigating a criminal case against former head of Engels district of Saratov Region Mikhail Lysenko and members of the gang organized by him. Lysenko is charged with setting up a stable armed group (gang) with the purpose to attack citizens (part 1 of article 209 of the RF Criminal Code), organization of a murder, committed by members of the gang (paragraphs "g" and "h" of part 2 of article 105), illegal handling of firearms by an organized group (part 3 of article 222), abduction by an organized group (part 3 of article 126), organization of a crime against a defender connected with preliminary investigation with inflicting bodily harm (part 4 of article 296), extortion and bribe-taking on a large scale (paragraphs "c" and "d" of part 4 of article 290), legalization of property got by criminal activity (part 1 of article 174.1). His accomplices in addition charged with deliberate grievous bodily harm using firearms (paragraph "a" of part 3 of article 111), robberies (paragraph "a" of part 3 of article 161), extortion (paragraph "a" of part 3 of article 163), hooliganism using firearms, accompanied by infliction of bodily harm (part 2 of article 213 and part 2 of article 116).

According to investigators, Lysenko, in order to get rid of possible rivals in business and later in political activity in 1998 together with mafia boss Nefyodov organized a stable armed group (gang), which acted in Saratov Region for more than 10 years. In all, 11 members of the gang were prosecuted for 12 grievous and especially grievous crimes. One of the organizers – Nefyodov – who had executed Lysenko's felonious orders, was sentenced to a long term in July 2012.

In addition investigators found that in 2007, Lysenko, being head of Engels, took a bribe of more than 92 million rubles for assisting representatives of a commercial organization in allocating a piece of land they needed, but which was municipal property, to build there a shopping center (Lazurny) in the town of Engels and for general patronage in reconciling with administrative and municipal authorities the problems of building.

Investigators found and arrested part of Lysenko's money got by illegal activity, it is in all more than 1 million US dollars, 42 gold bars, personal and real assets (a floating dacha, a premium-class car and a cottage in an elite district in Engels and others) worth more than 40 million rubles. It should be noted that Lysenko's wage as a head of municipal district was no more than 90 thousand rubles.

The most part of the money used by Lysenko to his own ends through his authorized delegates was not found.

Investigators also revealed that in 2008 Nefyodov was tortured in a prison in Saratov Region to make him give false evidence that he alone had organized in 1998 murder of Nikolai Balashov from Engels involving as perpetrators persons that had already been dead at the moment and had not committed the crime. This way, despite Nefyodov, the real organizers and perpetrators of the crime stayed unknown and the murder of Balashov stayed unsolved for 10 years. The criminal case over this crime was suspended several times until it was taken by main Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee. Investigators of the Directorate with the collected evidence prosecuted Lysenko and Nefyodov for organizing the murder of Balashov.

On 1 March 2013, head of pre-trial detention facility No 1 of Saratov Alexander Ananyev together with the convicts Anatoly Prokhorov and Oleg Cherkasov were sentenced to long prison terms for exceeding official powers and complicity in torturing Nefyodov. The organizer of the torture Nikolay Mazyuk, a former office of Saratov Region Directorate of the Federal Security Service escaped from investigators and is internationally wanted. The court ruled in absentia to place him into custody as a pre-trial restraining measure.

It should be noted that during the investigation and after it the interested persons involving representatives of elective authorities by spreading messages supporting Lysenko in Internet and media are still actively propagate Lysenko's innocence by spreading false information about methods and results of the investigation and the evidence. In addition investigators found that such messages had been spread on behalf of Russian citizens living in Saratov Region who were not the authors to them. The messages contained false information about allegedly illegal actions of investigators of the

Investigative Committee.

It should be noted that the organizer of the gang Lysenko and its active members Akhilgov, who was earlier convicted of especially grievous crime and Belikov, who is serving his term, did not admitted their guilt in full and use their right to jury trial. According to investigators active spread of messages supporting Lysenko by interested persons are aimed at citizens living in Saratov Region in the first place, that is – potential jurors, to press them and make them believe in Lysenko's innocence.

Investigators have collected enough evidence and the case with the approved indictment on 19 March 2013 was forwarded to court to be tried on the merits.

At present investigators are going on investigating a criminal case against other members of the gang organized by Lysenko and Nefyodov, they are checking their involvement in other especially grievous crimes in Saratov Region before 2010. Actions of law enforcement officers in the region, who made procedural decisions as for the illegal activity of the gang members, will also be qualified.

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