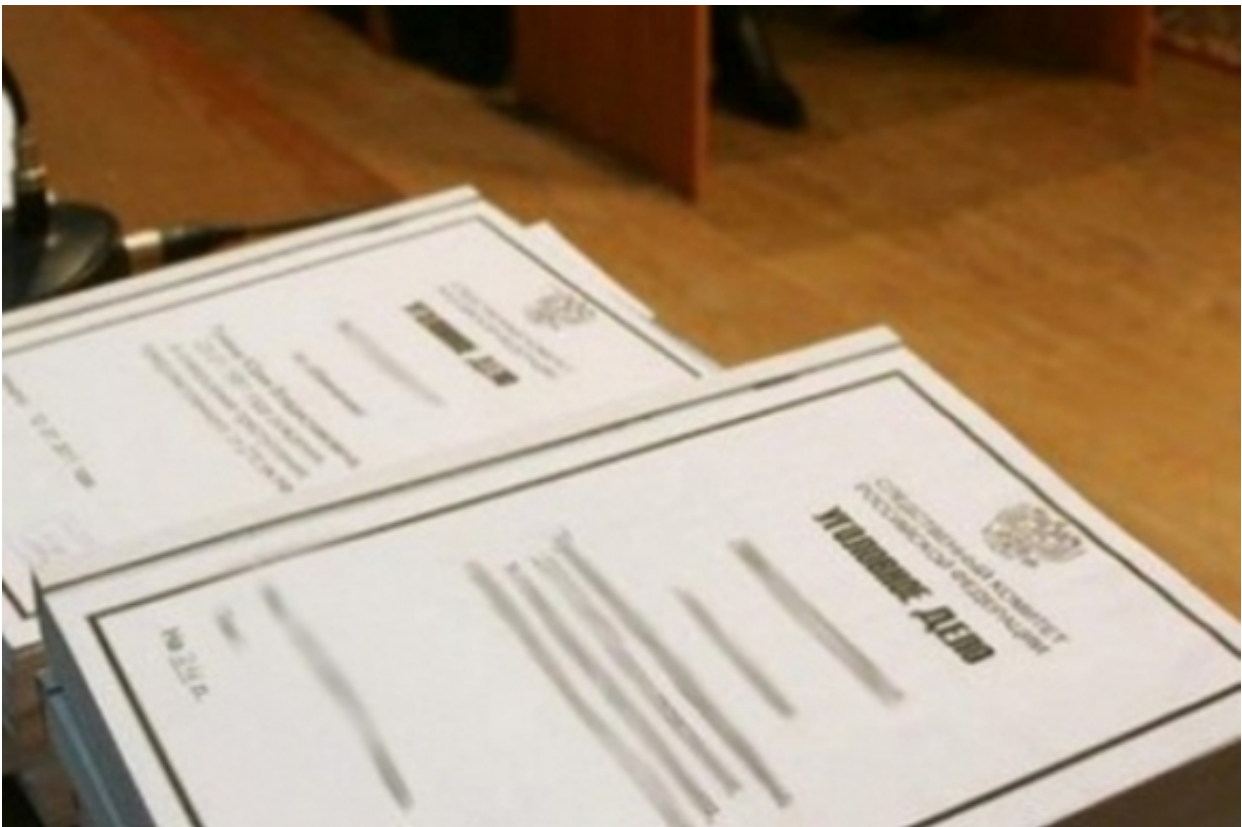


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## **In Chelyabinsk Region criminal investigation completed against gang members who committed heinous crimes in Sverdlovsk and Chelyabinsk Regions**



Chelyabinsk Region investigative agencies of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation completed a criminal investigation against seven residents of the city of Nizhny Tagil, who as part of an armed group kidnapped businessmen and demanded money from them in 2011-2012. Depending on the role of each, they are accused of committing crimes under Paragraphs "a", "b" of Part 4 of Article 162 of the RF Criminal Code (robbery), Paragraph "a" of Part 3 of Article 126 of the RF Criminal Code (kidnapping), Paragraphs "a", "b" of Part 4 of Article 163 of the RF Criminal Code (extortion), Part 3 of Article 222 of the RF Criminal Code (illegal purchase, possession and carrying of weapons ), Parts 1, 2 of Article 209 of the RF Criminal Code (creation of a gang and participation in it).

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According to investigators, in 2009, a stable armed group of eight people who had assault rifles, gas pistols and ammunition was created in the Sverdlovsk Region. The criminals also used a uniform of traffic police officers and a special vehicle. The youngest of the offenders was 23 year-old at the time, the oldest one was 42.

In the period from 2011 to 2012, members of the gang attacked four businessmen in the Sverdlovsk and Chelyabinsk Regions; they held them and demanded a ransom for their release in the amount of 10-20 million rubles. The victims were released after they had given a part of the sums to the criminals with the promise to pay the rest later. Each of the businessmen had paid from 80 thousand to 4 million for freedom.

The court decided to remand five members of the gang in custody; two others are under travel restrictions and the promise of appropriate behavior.

Investigators collected sufficient evidence incriminating the accused of committing those crimes; in connection with this, a criminal case with the confirmation of the indictment has been sent to the court for consideration on the merits.

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