
In Khakassia court considers appeal against sentence on Sayano-Shushenskaya Hydro Power Plant accident



The sentence to the all seven accused of the accident at Sayano-Shushenskaya Hydro Power Plant was passed on 23 December last year. Investigators had managed to reveal the role and prove guilt of each of the accused, though it was a hard job. In addition to numerous complications involved in investigating the industrial accident unrivaled in its scale, the investigators faced violent resistance of the accused and their lawyers, starting with their denial of the evidence and ending with different ways they used to drag out the inquiry. Eventually, the sum of all the evidence (this includes a unique comprehensive expert examination, statements made by witnesses, specialists and some other data) allowed the investigators, and later the court to convict the accused unambiguously (I will remind here that Director of branch of OAO RusGidro – P.S. Neporozhny Sayano-Shushenskaya Hydropower Plant Nikolai Nevolko and chief engineer of the plant Andrei Mitrofanov received 6 years to be served in a minimum-security penal colony, deputy directors of RusGidro branch office Yevgeny Shervarli got 5.5 years and Gennady Nikitenko 5 years 9 months and employees of

Equipment Monitoring Service Alexander Matviyenko and Alexander Klyukach got a 4.5-year suspended sentence each and Vladimir Beloborodov was amnestied). The fact that the sentence was impartial and deserved was evident to everyone, except for the defendants and their lawyers. It seemed that it was high time for them to remember about their conscience and accept with dignity the sentence for the death of 75 innocent people, let alone the destroyed hydro power plant – the creation of hundreds of thousands of our compatriots. The whole country and relatives of the killed in the first place hoped that at least during the trial the accused would repent and say that they were sorry. But instead they dragged out the process using ingenious techniques: the lawyers took sick leaves by turns, naturally stopping the process for that period. Considering that there were a lot of lawyers and the sick leaves took weeks to end the tactics was obvious – to drag the process until statute of limitations could be used. When that attempt failed and the well-deserved sentence was passed they decided to use the last chance. Nobody is denied the right to use any legal ways for protection including appeals, but the question is where had their enviable persistence, consistency and commitment been before 17 August 2009, when the tragedy happened? If before that they had honestly discharged their duties and done their job, the budget would have saved billions rubles that were spent to restore the pride of Russian hydropower engineering, Yuri Bulanovsky, Dmitry Kolesnichenko, Sergey Nelidov and many others from the 75 victims would have lived and enjoyed their lives instead of having been killed by disorder and slovenliness of the people who were in charge of their lives.

Head of Media Relations V.I. Markin

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