
Investigation opened against Vladimir Katryuk who took part in Khatyn massacre during the Great Patriotic War



The Main Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee has launched a criminal investigation against Vladimir Katryuk suspected of a crime under article 357 of the RF Penal Code (genocide).

According to investigators, during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) between the USSR and fascist Germany, Katryuk joined the 3rd company of the 115th German battalion of security police, which in 1942 joined the 118th German battalion of Schutzmannschaft (hereinafter Battalion 118) under the command of Ukrainian officers and under general leadership of German officers of SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger.

Approximately from January 1943, Battalion 118 and SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger were based near the village of Pleshchenicy and the town of Lahoyks, Minsk Region, Belorussian Soviet Republic, about 20 km from the village of Khatyn, Lahoyks District, Minsk Region, Belorussia.

On 23 March 1943, Katryuk, in the ranks of sergeant and being chief of the section of the first platoon of the first company of Battalion 118, acted deliberately following instruction of unknown

German fascist officers of SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger. Together with staff chief of Battalion 118 Grigory Vasyura and second in command of the first company of Battalion 118 Vasily Meleshko and other officers from Battalion 118 and soldiers of SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger he arrived in Khatyn to commit a mass murder of the village population who was not involved in military actions.

The said persons, pursuing the main object of Nazism – creation of racially pure state (the state of Aryan race), for the purpose of entire annihilation of Slavic ethnic group, including those living in Belorussia, by killing, wounding and other ways of physical elimination of the ethnic group, violating the Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (The Hague, 18 October 1907) organized mass shooting and burning of civilians living in Khatyn and destruction of their houses.

During the said period of time, Katryuk, following instruction of German officers, deliberately, together with Vasyura, Meleshko and other soldiers of Battalion 118 and SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger, actively implementing the criminal fascist program of destroying the so called lower races, turned the villagers out of their houses and gathered them in one place outside. Then all of them, including elderly people, women and children, were taken at gun points to a shed on the outskirts of the village and forced inside. After that the soldiers of Battalion 118 set the shed on fire. They shot those trying to escape.

They killed 149 civilians, including 75 children and minors, and destroyed all the houses in the village.

In all, over 400 thousand civilians were killed in different districts of Belorussia during the time of German occupation, between 1941 and 1944.

The military court of the Belorussian Soviet Republic found Vasyura and Meleshko guilty in Khatyn massacre case and sentenced them to capital punishment – to be shot (the sentence was carried into effect in 1975).

The said crimes of Katryuk and other unknown soldiers of Battalion 118 falls under article 1 of the Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Council No 39 “On punishment for German fascist villains guilty of murders and tortures of Soviet civilians and captive Red Army soldiers, for spies, betrayers of their country from among Soviet people and their accomplices” of 19.04.1943, under which German, Italian, Romanian, Hungarian, Finnish fascist villains exposed of murders and tortures of Soviet civilians and Red Army soldiers, as well as spies and betrayers of their country from among Soviet people were sentenced to hanging. The said Decree has never been suspended or cancelled in due order.

In accordance with article 1 of the Convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity of 26 November 1968, no statutory limitations shall apply to war crimes as they are defined in article 6 in the Charter of the international Military Tribunal, Nurnberg, of 8 August 1945, including murder of civilians in occupied territories. Russia, as the

legal successor of the USSR, has undertaken to prosecute Nazi criminals and will seek extradition of Katryuk, who now lives in Canada.

At present, investigative operations are underway to find out all the circumstances of the crime.

Head of Media Relations V.I. Markin

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