

In Sverdlovsk Region members of so called “Fedorovich gang” jailed



A court has recognized the evidence gathered by the Sverdlovsk Region investigating bodies of the Russia's Investigative Committee sufficient to convict a 29-year-old lawyer from Yekaterinburg Vasily Fedorovich and eight of his accomplices aged between 22 and 34 that formed a gang. Depending on the role of each one they were found guilty of crimes under parts 1, 2 and 3 of article 209 of the RF Penal Code (banditry), part 2 of article 105 (murder), part 3 of article 30, part 2 of article 105 (attempted murder), part 3 of article 126 (abduction), part 1 of article 282 (incitement of hatred or enmity and disparagement), part 1 of article 119 (threat to kill), part 3 of article 161 (robbery), part 4 of article 162 (robbery), part 4 of article 159 (fraud), part 4 of article 158 (theft), part 1 of article 132 (sexual abuse), part 3 of article 166 (abstraction of a transport means without aim of stealing it) and article 127 (illegal deprivation of freedom).

The court and investigators have revealed that the gang that used be led by 30-year-old Daniil Potashnikov and 29-year-old Vasily Fedorovich, in the period between December 2006 and June

2012 committed In Yekaterinburg, Sverdlovsk and Kurgan Regions a number of serious and very serious crimes against citizens. The members of the gang committed 14 murders and attempted murders of 5 more people. The gang had two leaders Fedorovich, a lawyer from Yekaterinburg and Potashnikov, who was killed. The investigators believe that Potashnikov in addition to looking for victims, was in charge of organizing the attacks and distribution of roles among the gangsters in each case. When plotting an abduction or murder he decided who was to follow the victim before the crime, who was to kill them and the number of people that had to take part in a murder or abduction; he was the one to decide who had to hide the traces. In addition to immediate participation in murders and planning, Fedorovich was in charge of juridical security of their activity, determined the order of actions of each of the gangsters so that it was harder for law-enforcement officials to prove their involvement to crimes. Together with Potashnikov he also took part in plotting crimes. In all, regional Investigative Committee charges Fedorovich with 20 crimes, including leadership of a gang, several counts of murder and extremist activity involving posting extremist videos on the Internet. Potashnikov took part in several murders. This way, He and Fedorovich killed a Syrian and American businessman Georgy Kara Yakubyan in March 2012.

To commit the crimes the gangsters used different kinds of cold arms, gas and firearms (knives, guns, revolvers and hunting rifles). They also used other objects as arms: tomahawks, carabines, bludgeons, knuckle-dusters, rubber sticks, etc. An investigating team found and confiscated all those objects in residences of some of the gangsters, including Fedorovich. To make the gang more mobile the criminals used different vehicles (Bogdan, Dodge, Mitsubishi, VAZ cars). They discussed their plans in several flats, where the criminals or their relatives lived, and in a leased garage, where they also committed crimes, including murders. The only woman in the gang was a 22-year-old student of one of Yekaterinburg universities Yelena Sukhikh. She was charged with several crimes, including murder.

It was revealed that the gang involved a 31-year-old currently former police officer Ivan Guzhin, who then had worked in the police. Using his police ID he bought police uniforms in specialized shops to have been used by his accomplices for their crimes. Besides, he bought handcuffs and provided the gang with information about citizens which were then attacked.

Potashnikov and his cousin Roman Kiriyaakov had committed their first crime long before they met Fedorovich, in 2006. The victim was Potashnikov's mother. Late in the evening her son had come up to her house, rang her intercom and asked her to come down to the porch to have a talk. But hardly had the woman stepped onto the porch, Kiriyaakov beat her aunt to death with an iron pipe. The motive was simple – Potashnikov had needed money. After the murder he had become the heir and sold his mother's flat. Two years later Potashnikov decided to continue killing his relatives with the help of his cousin. This way, in 2008-2009, they had killed two brothers and father of Potashnikov's wife. He had done that so that he with his wife and small daughter could move to a large three-room flat owned by the relatives.

Most of the crimes the gang committed out of mercenary motives, however, in some cases some of

the crimes (a murder and three attempted murders) were committed for national motive. The investigators believe that the gang committed two murders for no apparent reasons, that is out of hooliganism, and one of the murders was committed with especial brutality (they had killed Kustov in Fedorovich's holiday house – they did not let him eat or drink, tortured for a long time, beat him, burned with red hot screws, etc.). In May 2011, they had committed another crime, but that time in the town of Kurgan. According to investigators, Potashnikov had acted on the order and tried to kill the CEO of real estate agency. In broad daylight, he shot several times at businessman's head from a non-lethal gun. But despite bad wounds doctors had saved his life. It should be reminded that though some of the crimes were extremist ones and were committed out of hooliganism, but still their main motive was greed. In pursuit of easy profit they killed a Syrian and American businessman Georgy Kara Yakubyan.

This way, in March 2012, Fedorovich had invited the foreigner in the city of Yekaterinburg, allegedly for settling a joint business there. But the gangsters had played Potashnikov's plan at Koltsovo airport: Potashnikov, Fedorovich and Kiriyaakov had taken Yakubyan to the forest and stole from him a laptop computer, credit cards and external hard disks worth more than 100 thousand rubles. Then the perpetrators had tortured the victim (namely pulled his teeth with pliers, broke his fingers) and then killed. The businessman's burned and handcuffed body was found in an inspection pit of an abandoned garage in Kommunisticheskaya street in Yekaterinburg in April 2012. Somewhere in late winter 2012 the gang had been joined by Artyom Vafin. To make the young man to prove his loyalty, Potashnikov had offered him to kill a man, no matter who, just a man. As a result, Vafin had chosen an absolute stranger: on 17 May 2012, he stabbed several times a 33-year-old unemployed man in Bilimbayevskaya street. The man died and Vafin was accepted into the gang.

There were 11 people who took part in crimes, but investigation was finished only against 9 of them. One of the perpetrators is still wanted – Semyon Yermolinsky, 28, from Saint-Petersburg (he is charged with murders of two people and robbery). Daniil Potashnikov was killed by his accomplices in May 2012. His body was found by investigators in June 2013 in the woods near the town of Pervouralsk. The body was identified by means of DNA tests. During the probe 6 of the defendants were remanded in custody, one was under house arrest and another one was released on recognizance.

To prove that each of them was involved in the crimes the investigators carried out a lot of investigative operations. They questioned over 200 witnesses, ran about 600 forensic inquiries: namely, forensic DNA tests and medical examination, ballistics and criminalistics inquiries. They also ran a fire technical examination, handwriting and situation expert examinations. There are 107 volumes of criminal records in the case.

The court has sentenced the gang's leader Vasily Fedorovich to 22 years to be served in a maximum-security penal colony, Kiriyaakov to life in prison to be served in a special-security penal colony. Other defendants depending on their roles in the crimes got between 6 and 24 years to be served in maximum and minimum-security penal colonies. They are also to pay damages.

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