
Probes launched against high-ranking Ukrainian military and deputy Oleg Lyashko



The Main Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee has opened a criminal investigation against Defense Minister of Ukraine Stepan Poltorak, Head of the General Headquarters of the Defense Ministry of Ukraine Viktor Muzhenko, Commander of Land Forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Anatoly Pushnyakov, Commander of the National Guard of Ukraine Nikolai Balan and other unidentified individuals from among military of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and National Guard. They are suspected of crimes under part 1 of article 356, article 357 of the RF Penal Code (use of prohibited means and methods of warfare and genocide).

This way, in the period of time between 31 may and 1 September 2015, unidentified people from among the military of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and national Guard, following knowingly criminal orders of Poltorak, Muzhenko, Puzhnyakov and Balan, for the purpose of killing a group of Russian-speaking people living in the self-declared Donetsk people's Republic, shelled from heavy

weapons (of at least 122 m caliber) facilities of civil infrastructure, which were not military targets.

The investigators believe that the military violated: Protocol on ceasing using weapons in the southeast of Ukraine (Minsk, 05.09.2014) and Memorandum to it (Minsk, 19.09.2014), Convention on protection of civilian persons in time of war (Geneva, 12.08.1949) and Additional protocol II (Geneva, 08.06.1977), Convention on prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide (Paris, 09.12.1948), Convention on the rights of the child (New-York, 20.11.1989).

45 people were killed, and over 160 more were wounded in that shelling, at least 163 buildings were destroyed or partially destroyed, including houses, the court, substation of the mine and others.

In addition, the Main Investigations Directorate has launched a criminal investigation against deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the 7th convocation Oleg Lyashko and other individuals from among soldiers of the Azov battalion over crimes under paragraphs “a” and “c” of part 2 of article 126, paragraphs “e” and “f” of part 2 of article 117, part 1 of article 356 of the RF Penal Code (abduction, torture, use of prohibited means and methods of warfare).

According to investigators, on 17 September 2014, four soldiers of the Azov battalion executed an order of Lyashko, who was the founder of the battalion, and illegally got into the flat of Dmitry Tchaikovsky in the town of Mariupol. They searched the flat, tied Tchaikovsky and using force took him to the base of the battalion and put him in a metallic container. During 24 hours Lyashko together with the soldiers beat the victim hard and threatened to kill him, demanding information on the stolen guns they thought he had. Later they took Tchaikovsky in the boot of a car to wasteland and continued to torture him. They did not get any information and had to release him.

The Russia’s Investigative Committee opened the cases guided by part 3 of article 12 of the RF Penal Code, which gives the right to prosecute foreign citizens who have committed a crime outside the Russian Federation if the crime was directed against a citizen of the Russian Federation, and in cases provided by the international agreement of the Russian Federation if the foreign citizens were not prosecuted in the foreign state and are prosecuted in the Russian Federation.

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

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10 September 2015

Page address: <https://en.sledcom.ru/news/item/967030>

