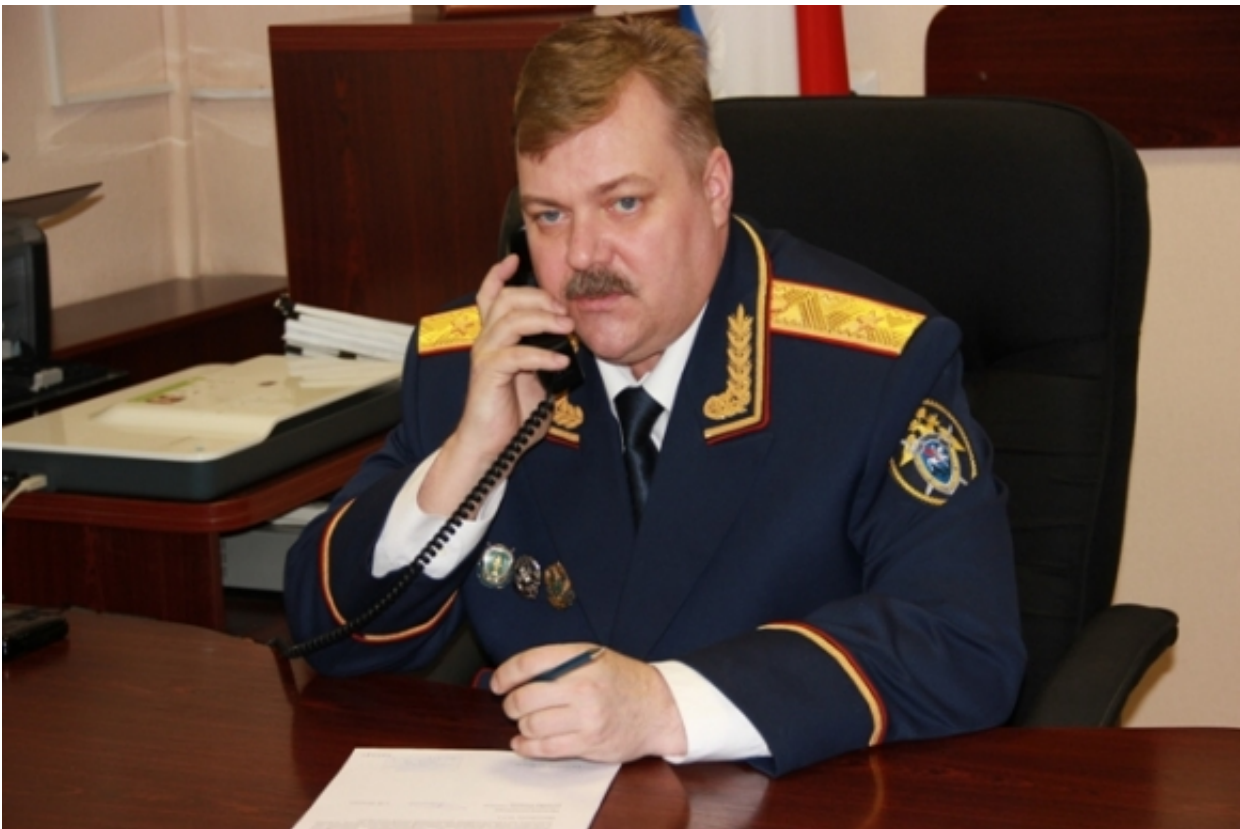

Interview by O. Doronin, head of the Mari-El Republic Investigations Directorate of the Russia’s Investigative Committee to newspaper Moskovsky Komsomolets in Mari-El



Searching for the truth

The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation was established on 15 January 2009. The idea of independent investigatory unit of state authority is not new: for the first time it was implemented by Peter the Great during juridical reform. What is an underlying task of reconstitution of a similar body today? What are its objectives and ways to reach them? And its achievements if any? We are talking about it with Oleg DORONIN, head of the Mari-El Republic Investigations Directorate of the Russia’s Investigative Committee.

- Mr. Doronin, will it be correct to say that the Investigative Committee was created as a kind of “special mission unit of the prosecutor’s office” – a division whose mission is to solve the most

serious and difficult tasks? Has the idea of separating from the prosecutor's office such "special unit" proved efficient?

- Prosecutors office investigation has always been a separate unit, but subordinate to the prosecutor. Prosecutor carried out departmental control and supervision. Those two functions were separated. Prosecutor's office is a body whose first priority is supervision over observance of the law in all spheres of our life, including over procedural activity of investigating body. However, independence of the investigation is the main condition that it will be carried out impartially. The prosecutor's office supervises observance of laws and rights of citizens, but has no power to interfere in investigation.

We separated from prosecutor's office, but kept continuity, took into consideration all the experience we had obtained. Thanks to the reform we have managed to adopt new ideas and innovations. The Investigative Committee has become an agency unique for Russia as only our investigators – because of their special status – can and have the right to investigate cases against deputies, judges, prosecutors, policemen, investigators, lawyers.

Over 2012, 39 investigators of the Mari-El Investigations Directorate moved out to attend the crime scene more than 1,500 times, carried out 3,627 checks on messages about crimes, investigated 464 criminal cases, including 80 murders, 21 sex crimes, 48 property crimes, 7 tax crimes, 30 official crimes.

- The country is shaken by a row of conspicuous corruption scandals, the most high-ranking officials are under investigation. Exceeding official powers, corruption and frauds among officials – there are a lot of such crimes revealed. Does their publicity in media make for reduction of the number of such crimes?

- The problem of corruption is still urgent at both federal and regional levels. In 2012 the Mari-El Investigations Directorate investigated criminal cases against 2 deputies, 2 heads of local administration, 5 policemen, 3 staffers of Mari-El Emergency Ministry, 3 staffers of prisons, 1 bailiff and others were prosecuted.

Though media keep informing about top officials prosecuted for official forgeries when they employed ghost names, such crimes are still committed. In 2012, 2 heads of rural settlements, a school headmaster and library staff were prosecuted for that.

Fighting corruption it's important to understand that not always everything depends on officials. The civil involvement of ordinary people is also very important. The situation is difficult because interests of bribe-takers and bribe-givers are similar. A student prefers paying to get pass a test. A patient agrees to pay a doctor to get an illicit medical certificate. And all that is by mutual agreement. Their actions are illegal, but they satisfy each party. Such crimes are highly latent. It happens that prevention of such acts is more important than prosecuting the responsible ones. And

here the media have a very important role as a means of building worldview in both citizens and officials.

For example, telling about the results of our activity in media, we several times informed that drivers had been prosecuted for trying to give bribes to officers of the State Traffic Safety Inspectorate. As a result the number of such crimes has decreased. In 2011 we investigated 25 such cases, and in 2012 – 15.

- It is shocking that criminals are so young. There is a category that sounds very odd: children-criminals. What is it: forwardness, dissolution of morals, impunity? Is it worth making the age of criminal discretion?

- Last year the investigations directorate investigated a number of terrible crimes, which appall even the most experienced investigators.

In Medvedevsky district teenagers attacked a taxi driver to sell a car. One of them killed him smashing his head with a bat.

In Morkinsky district two teenagers searching for wealth broke into a house of an elderly woman, beat her up and raped. The woman could not suffer the tortures and died.

Mainly the minors are driven by desire to get quick profit and they don't want to make money by their own labor.

The 2012 reform of the Investigative Committee all serious and especially serious crimes committed by minors are our jurisdiction. Thus we now investigate robberies, burglaries, brigandism and other crimes. In all, our investigators last year investigated 48 criminal cases against minors. Among them 1 murder, 1 rape, 33 stealings.

Beside investigating crimes committed by the underage we also protect their rights. In 2012 67 children were recognized victims. Among them 8 are under 5, 12 – aged from 5 to 10, 22 – from 10 to 14 and 25 – from 14 to 18.

As for the age of criminal discretion I can say that staff of the Investigative Committee do not pass laws, they only execute them.

- Can you give an example of a solved case worthy a textbook? Name of an investigator virtuoso?

- The most of cases investigated by the Investigative Committee require from the investigator a lot of knowledge and skills. But I would like especially note a criminal case solved by Alexander Grigorov, a senior investigator of the investigations department in Yoshkar-Ola.

At first the investigations department got a message that a woman was missing, she left home and children. A criminal case was launched into the fact. They could not find her. About a month later a sack with a mummified body was discovered in a flat. The victim and the cause of the death were unknown, but investigators found a blood-stained knife at the crime scene. The investigator thought that it might have been the body of the missing woman. To identify the corpse he had the DNA test run, where he produced samples of the body and of the missing woman's mother. The expert did not give a definite conclusion and then another examination was run where a woman's photo and the photo of the body's skull were compared. And that time the investigator got a complete match. But there still were two main questions: who killed her and how.

Studying connections of the victim, the investigator found that she had gone out with a young man and it was he who for a brief time had rented a flat, where the body was found. Under the pressure of evidence the man confessed the crime, he explained that he had strangled the woman. But the investigator was bothered by the knife found in the flat. It was also examined and the expert concluded that it was the murder instrument.

- What has surprised you in the row of solved crimes? At the last press conference Mr. Putting for example confessed that he had an unpleasant surprise to learn that "not everything went smoothly" even in high-tech industries, the money got lost even in designing GLONASS. Have you caught red-handed the people, who you wouldn't ever think badly about?

- It is the job of inquiry bodies such as Interior Ministry, Federal Security Service and others to discover crimes. If we see signs of crimes in their materials, we launch criminal proceedings and prosecute a person notwithstanding their ranks or position in society. I think that if a person commits a crime, he or she has to answer for that.

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