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## **Interview by Andrey Lavrenko, Head of Saint-Petersburg Main Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee to Kommersant newspaper (Saint-Petersburg)**



“Our practice shows that organized crime is impossible without help of law enforcement agents”

Head of Saint-Petersburg Main Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee about work of two new divisions

Last year two new divisions were set up in Saint-Petersburg Main Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee, whose powers include investigating crimes committed by law enforcement agents. ANDREY LAVRENKO, Head of Saint-Petersburg Main Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee told the KOMMERSANT correspondent DMITRY MARAKULIN about the first results of these divisions' activity, fighting corruption and ethnic crimes.

- Last year in Saint-Petersburg school boy Nikita Leontyev was beaten up to death, then an elderly woman with a grandson was run over at a pedestrian crossing – both of them died on the spot. These

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crimes stirred a wide social response, not least of all because the charges were brought against policemen. It was not very easy to investigate those crimes, as far as I know.

- Yes, law enforcement agents have opportunities to resist investigation due to their professional activity. The case against the policeman Miroshkin, who ran over the elderly woman and her grandson, can be an example (Kommersant made a detailed article on the case). The defend offered different versions, but within two weeks our investigators managed to disprove them and find out who and in what way was preventing the investigation. This is by all means a file-and-rank case, but it demonstrates what our staff have to face.

I will add that citizens usually judge our work by high-profile cases, which attract the journalists. And these cases can serve for Saint-Petersburg citizens an example of unavoidable punishment for criminals.

-That means that due to hard way such cases are investigated in, your directorate has set up two departments whose staffers investigate crimes committed by representatives of law enforcement?

- Yes, those reasons are included. Now each department has a head and six investigators, who investigate the most difficult cases which often stir wide public response. They have the highest workload: each investigator has to deal with 5-6 cases, while the average number is 4. At present they are investigating over 40 criminal cases.

I would like to note that today our practice shows that organized crime is impossible without help of law enforcement agents. “Black” relators, drug dealing, prostitution, car thefts – everything involves indirectly or directly law enforcement officers. Moreover, the crimes committed by law enforcement officers undermine the authority of the authorities.

- And how do senior officers of Saint-Petersburg police react to your work in this area?

- We face no resistance from the main police department. I can only note the system in revealing crimes committed by police officers. Activity of inner security department of the regional main directorate of the Interior Ministry allows them revealing 70% of all crimes committed by the policemen.

- Head of regional main directorate of the Interior Ministry Sergey Umnov at the beginning of spring at the meeting of public council of the Saint-Petersburg police said that investigators are not too active in launching criminal proceedings over violence against policemen.

- We pay enough attention to this kind of crimes – 90 criminal cases have been launched and are investigated on a high level. But there is another aspect here – insult to the policeman. Yes, criminal liability is provided for this, but with specific features of our work and our mentality it is on the verge of administrative liability. I am stressing that all the crimes with real encroachment on life and

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health of a law enforcement officer we investigate in the most serious manner.

- One more subject that interests both public and government – fighting corruption.
- Now we are investigating about 200 criminal cases over corruption with 38 law enforcement officers and 18 officials of different levels as subjects. The work of an investigator looking into corruption cases is a unique opportunity to reveal weak spots in both law and work of state bodies, as well as the industry itself, to reveal reasons and circumstances due to which the crime became possible. I would like to note that our directorate has the highest in Russia percentage of initiated corruption cases from the materials received.

Let's take housing and communal service for example. Our investigators have solved the scheme of receiving contracts on repairing the roofs and citizens by the way were not satisfied with the work done. Business had connections with officials of the administration of Vasileostrovsky district: the businessman won almost half of all tenders on repairing of roof. This case has become a kind of practical training session for revealing crimes of this kind, which then allowed launching about 100 similar cases in Saint-Petersburg.

- Do you have leverage to prevent corruption?
- Yes, each investigation is finished by submitting a statement to the senior officials of the body the accused was employed with. Analysis by the investigator can be of great help in preventing such crimes.
- But I heard doubts about efficiency of such statements.
- But implementation of recommendations of our investigators is completely the competence of the senior officials of those bodies where the statement goes. It's clear that the formal answer is: we know that there are some problems, but we take it into account. Unfortunately the practice of implementing our requirements is not worked through yet. Nonetheless, in accordance with our statements more than 200 officials and workers of commercial structures have been held liable for different crimes.
- Do you think the public is ready to give you a helping hand?
- Unfortunately, the citizens, who are exasperated by the current state of things, themselves justify petty (domestic) corruption. It happens that we can't find people who would agree to take part in operative experiments. And here I see partiality and unfairness. I offer all your readers to take part in this work and I promise no query will stay without reply.
- What is the general estimation of the criminal situation in Saint-Petersburg?

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- The number of serious and especially serious crimes under our jurisdiction has not grown. But I should not high level of domestic intoxicated murders. 90% of contract murders committed in 2012 have been solved.

Ethnic crimes are being active: each third murder and each second rape are committed by migrants and the most of robberies are also committed by ethnical groups. And this is disturbing.

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