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## **Interview of the head of the Investigative Committee Directorate for the Republic of North Ossetia - Alania V. Volkov for "Interfax"**



Ahead of the second anniversary of the formation of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, the correspondent of "Interfax" met with the head of the Investigative Committee Directorate for the Republic of North Ossetia - Alania Major General Vitaly Volkov.

A little time has passed since the formation of the Investigative Committee. Would you tell us what has changed in the performance of your agency?

January 15, 2011 the Law "On the Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation" came into force. Thus, for the first time in the modern history of our country, the investigative agency appeared that is not subject to the procedural and organizational control by any other body. The general leadership of the Committee is performed by the President of the Russian Federation. Among the significant changes, there is a significant expansion of powers of the Investigative Committee. The area of responsibility comprises the investigation of serious and very serious crimes, including those related to tax evasion, committed against minors and by minors, terrorism and

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extremism crimes, abuses of office by employees of commercial and other organizations. A little time has passed to speak confidently of high performance. But the fact that the reform made the Investigation Committee an independent structure imposes additional responsibility on us. Over the past year, our investigators have handled 1,406 criminal cases, 626 criminal cases have been sent to courts. In 2012, the Directorate was in the top three territorial investigation units of the Russian Federation.

Please, tell us about the most high-profile investigations of 2012 that have drawn increased public interest.

Last year, our investigators successfully solved numerous criminal cases, such as a gas cylinder explosion at a wedding party in one of the private houses of Vladikavkaz that resulted in a large number of victims, the double murder of State Protection officers of the Republic of South Ossetia committed at the center of Vladikavkaz, the murder and attempted murder of twin brothers in Digora, the killing of minor son of a senior officer of the Ministry of Interior of Russia in Mozdok (the jury found all defendants guilty of serious crimes against the person, and despite the fact that the three of them were minors, the court sentenced them to 8 - 16 years imprisonment), an attempt on the life of law enforcement officers at the Police Control Station-105 in the Prigorodny District. At present, we are investigating the criminal case against the head of the Vladikavkaz Office of the Russian Pension Fund who is suspected of abuse of power involving heavy consequences and the murder of Deputy Mufti of the Republic committed in Vladikavkaz. The fact we have established the offenders proves the efficiency of our work, but this result was achieved not just through the efforts of our investigators, a great job has been done by the staff of regional operational units of the Federal Security Service and the Interior Ministry.

As far as we know, one of the priorities of your work is the detection of crimes committed in the past?

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While there are unsolved murders, while the rapists and child molesters are walking free, we will not have time to sleep even in case of zero crime rates. Unsolved murders, rapes and other serious crimes of the past are the subject of our attention. As I said, as a result of joint action with the operational units of other law enforcement agencies, this year, 48 criminal cases of the past have been solved and sent to the court. In two years, we have uncovered a hundred serious and very serious crimes committed between 1998 and 2004. Our Forensic Department is staffed with experienced and dedicated specialists who carry out analysis of past cases and take measures for their disclosure.

The experience of your staff cannot be doubted, but one would not get far without modern technology, especially in the investigation of such crimes?

You are right and we are trying to expand the material and technical base. The genetic fingerprinting laboratory of our Forensic Department is a breakthrough in forensic science. It allows us to identify a person by 99.99 per cent, the error is almost impossible. If there are any biological traces or fingerprints, the criminal will face punishment. An example of this is the identification of the suicide bomber who made an explosion at the Police Control Station-105. Thanks to competent investigative actions, when a fragment of the bomber's finger was found at the scene and seized to carry out an expert examination, his identity has been established. As a result, it took us less than a day to discover this crime.

We use forensic technologies that allow us to detect traces at the objects that were impossible to examine a few years ago. We also apply the hypnosis-induced recollection technique and the "lie detector".

What is the role of the Investigation Directorate in the fight against corruption?

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The main anti-corruption activities must be directed at prevention and elimination of causes of corruption. Only a comprehensive approach to this problem will help us to reduce its negative impact on society and the state. Since the Investigation Department has become an independent structure, its anti-corruption activities have significantly increased. Last year, we prosecuted 59 officials for corruption crimes. These figures significantly exceed the statistics for the same period last year and reflect the positive dynamics of our performance. Most of corruption cases were revealed in law enforcement agencies, municipal governments, health and education institutions and various regulatory bodies. These crimes are hard to investigate for they are usually latent and committed behind closed doors and without witnesses. Only meticulous work of the investigators makes it possible to identify the offender. In my opinion, such things as government bodies and corruption are incompatible. The state affected by corruption cannot function and develop normally. The law must be the same for everyone. None can use the office for criminal profit. As an example, I can mention the criminal case against the former investigating chief and two police officers of the Mozdok district who were accused of extortion (one of them escaped and was put on the federal wanted list). The court sentenced them to pay a fine of 1.5 million rubles and 10.6 million rubles, respectively. At present, the wanted offender is arrested and a criminal case against him has been sent to the court.

What measures are being taken by the Investigation Directorate to prevent crimes against children?

We have concluded a cooperation agreement with the plenipotentiary representative of the Head of the Republic for Children's Rights. Dealing with crimes against children, the investigators are looking for signs of crime in the actions of crime prevention officers and parents that contributed to the abuse of children. We have recently organized the work of the telephone line "A child in danger" (number: 1-2-3) in order to create more opportunities for immediate response to requests for the protection of minors. In addition, we encourage the participation of public leaders in addressing the issues of Children's rights protection within the framework of the Public Council under the Investigation Directorate.

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Currently, the media often discuss crimes committed by law enforcement officers. What is the situation in the Republic?

We have a principled position on this problem. No one is untouchable. If the actions of law enforcement officers include signs of crime, they are prosecuted regardless of their posts and past services. They must understand that their duty is the protection of the legitimate rights and interests of citizens, and when violating the law, they undermine credibility of the government and discredit law enforcement agencies. In 2012, 29 law enforcement officers were prosecuted, the criminal cases against them were sent to courts. One of these cases that provoked public outcry was filed against two criminal investigation officers of the police department number 2 of Vladikavkaz. They were charged with abuse of office (one of them escaped and was put on the federal wanted list). The court sentenced another to 3.5 years of imprisonment and deprived him of the right to hold positions in law enforcement for a period of 2 years.

Are your staff members "clear as crystals"?

Such people are hard to find, so our selection process is rather rigorous. We tend to recruit through the Public Assistance Institution. Law students help the investigators on a voluntary basis and join us after graduation. One in five does not pass a lie detector test: some were engaged in illegal activities, others took drugs or abused alcohol. In any case, I am responsible for the final decision. A person may look clear and be "rotten" inside. At the same time, people who made mistakes in the youth may have pure souls. Here I have to make a choice. However, even those who pass the selection sometimes cannot withstand the psychological stress.

How open are you to the public? How actively does your Directorate interact with the population?

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The heads of territorial investigation departments hold regular open office hours. At any time, in accordance with the schedule available on the official website of the Investigation Directorate, any citizen can get an appointment with the Investigation Directorate at 28, Gorkogo St., Vladikavkaz. My deputies and I visit the territorial investigative departments every week to meet with citizens. Despite the fact that people often apply on matters falling outside the competence of the Investigative Committee, we listen to them carefully and promptly take appropriate measures – consider applications or send them to competent bodies, each application is given attention. In addition, the citizens may apply directly to the Chairman of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation. In order to improve the processing of citizens' complaints, an "Online Reception" section was created on the official website of the Investigation Directorate. The site also contains an appeal to the citizens to cooperate with the investigating authorities in the fight against corruption. A "hotline" (8 (8672) 53-92-64) and "Stop the corruption" line (8 (8672) 54-16-93) of the Investigation Directorate are operating around o'clock to ensure prompt response to the reports on law violations and to receive information on corruption cases in every sphere of society and the state. Along with this, the Public Council under the Investigation Directorate is working to ensure the support and participation of civil society in the implementation of public policy on the fight against crime and corruption, the development of new socially important initiatives of the investigating bodies and the formation of active citizenship. All this ensures maximum availability and openness of our staff and the protection of citizens against crime. As a result of this work, the number of citizens' appeals has grown by more than a quarter. This shows increased confidence in the investigating authorities. We will continue to work in this direction - we need people to trust us.

## Изображения



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