The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Agencies Clash on Gambling Ring Case

By Natalya Krainova

March 24, 2011

Long-running tensions between prosecutors and investigators flared Thursday after the Prosecutor General's Office largely rejected Investigative Committee allegations that its officials had broken the law.

The prosecutor's office said it had failed to find evidence to back up Investigative Committee claims last month that Ivan Nazarov, a businessman suspected of running an illegal gambling operation in the Moscow region, had paid for overseas trips by regional prosecutors.

Prosecutors also denied allegations that a district head had underpriced plots of land he rented out to prosecutors and police officials, saying the amount was fair.

Seven Moscow region prosecutors, however, did violate ethical norms and have been reprimanded, the prosecutor's office said.

The office is continuing checks into the activities of three other prosecutors, including the Moscow region's top prosecutor, Alexander Mokhov, and his deputy Alexander Ignatenko,

both of whom have been suspended.

Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin lambasted prosecutors' findings, saying evidence possessed by investigators "completely refutes" them, Kommersant reported Thursday.

In particular, investigators have proof that Ignatenko tried to sell land that he was renting from the district head for 30,000 euros per 100 square meters, a source close to investigators told Kommersant.

The Investigative Committee also will appeal a decision by prosecutors this week to close a second criminal case against Nazarov, Kommersant said.

On Thursday, the Investigative Committee opened a third criminal case against Nazarov and his associates on charges of violating copyright and illegally accessing computer information, the committee said in a statement.

In February, prosecutors closed the first criminal case against Nazarov on charges of running an illegal gambling ring, citing insufficient evidence of wrongdoing. But investigators immediately opened a new case on related charges and sought Nazarov's re-arrest before he even stepped out of the pretrial detention center where he remains in custody.

Six people, including Nazarov and three police officers, were jailed in mid-February.

The clash between investigators and prosecutors comes after President Dmitry Medvedev announced in December that the two would be split into autonomous agencies after years of tensions. The committee is formally part of the Prosecutor General's Office.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/03/24/agencies-clash-on-gambling-ring-case-a5854