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Primorsky Partisans Found Guilty of Being Criminal Group

By The Moscow Times

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The Primorsky Partisans, a band of militants arrested in 2010 for allegedly killing two police officers and wounding six others, were found guilty of being an organized criminal group by a jury in a Primorye region court.

Members of the six-person group were also found guilty of murder, robbery, the attempted murder of law enforcement officers, resisting arrest, assault on a female taxi driver, and a number of related crimes, Interfax reported.

The partisans gained widespread media attention for publishing a video online in which they advocated armed struggle against "corrupt beasts" in the police force, who they accuse of drug trafficking. After forming in 2009, the group was reportedly involved in a string of incidents including robberies for cars, money and weapons.

The jury found that the band's leader was Alexander Kovtun, who stood on trial along with is

brother, Vadim Kovtun, and associates Roman Savchenko, Maxim Kirillov, Vladimir Ilyutikov, and Alexei Nikitin.

Two remaining members of the band, Andrei Sukhorada and Alexander Sladkikh,were found shot dead in an apartment when police raided in June 2010. The cause of death was ruled to be suicide.

Although the band pleaded guilty on a number of minor charges, members said the majority of guilt lies with their fallen comrades.

After the verdict a lawyer for Nikitin said that the trial provided "many grounds for appeal."

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