



Organized Crime

[Home](#) • [About Us](#) • [What We Investigate](#) • [Organized Crime](#) • [Cases](#) • [Vyacheslav Kirillovich Ivankov](#)

Investigative Programs: Organized Crime

Vyacheslav Kirillovich Ivankov New York, New York

The first significant Eurasian Organized Crime (EOC) investigation in the United States occurred in 1993 with the targeting of Vyacheslav Kirillovich Ivankov, also known as "Yaponchik," or "Yaponets," a Russian "thief-in-law" (vor v zakone), who, according to the Russian Ministry of the Interior (MVD), had been dispatched to the United States to act as the coordinating authority for all EOC activity in the U.S. The investigation determined that Ivankov led an international criminal organization that operated mainly in New York, Toronto, London, Vienna, Budapest and Moscow, but also in numerous other cities in the United States, Canada and Europe.

Ivankov's organization specialized in extorting Russian business interests. The investigation proved that the Russian principals of Summit International in New York City were being extorted by Ivankov's organization. Summit International is an investment advisory firm for Russian emigres in the United States. Ivankov and five of his subordinates were arrested by FBI agents on June 8, 1995. This investigation utilized numerous sensitive investigative techniques.

On July 8, 1996, in federal court in the Eastern District of New York, Ivankov, Sergei Ilgner, and Valeriy Novak were convicted of extortion and conspiracy charges. Also, Vladimir Topko was found guilty of conspiracy charges, and Leonid Abelis and Yakov Volovnik pled guilty and cooperated with prosecutors. Roustam Sadykov fled to Russia where the lack of an extradition treaty with the United States prevents him from being brought back for trial. Sentences imposed by the court ranged from four years to almost twelve years.

This case marks the first time that the FBI and the MVD worked side by side on a criminal investigation. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police also furnished information critical to the investigation. Ivankov was the first head of an international EOC group to be brought to trial and convicted in the United States. This case was also significant in that it prevented Ivankov's organization from establishing a solid presence in the United States.

Organized Crime Links

Organized Crime Home

About Organized Crime

- Overview
- Cases: Past and Present
- Glossary of Terms
- News and Features

Crime Threats & Programs

- African Criminal Enterprises
- Asian Criminal Enterprises
- Balkan Criminal Enterprises
- Eurasian Criminal Enterprises
- Italian Organized Crime/Mafia
- Middle Eastern Criminal Enterprises
- Sports Bribery Program

Intelligence & Reports

- International Org. Crime Intelligence & Operations Center
- Strategy to Combat International Organized Crime (pdf)

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