



► Ahmed Ozdojev

Estonians trapped by the Chechens

Rich Estonians who invested in the real estate of the Black Sea seaside resort in Varna, Bulgaria, with hopes of fat profits, were scammed by the local Chechen criminal gang, writes today's Äripäev.

Estonian developers were lured to this land of miracles by Ahmed Ozdojev, a former convict who brought together Estonians and local Chechens in Varna and, together with the Chechens, charged skyhigh commissions from Estonians.

"I recall that we did it in style - we withdrew a lot of cash from the bank, flew there with over 100,000 euros in pockets, and paid for the land," says one businessman who was lured to Bulgaria by Ozdojev and had set up joint ventures Družba-3 and Tchaika 2007 co-owned by people who were linked to the Chechen organised criminal group in Varna.

"Their objective was somewhat dubious. They controlled prices so well that we could not understand whether they realistically invested any money there or not. In principle, they used our money to become owners," said another Estonian shareholder of Družba-3.

Three-four years ago life in Estonia was beautiful – the economy was expanding and the real estate boom promised bigger riches. Free funds were itching in Estonians' pockets. Some of them believed the fairy tales of Gild investment bankers and invested in gold

digging in Armenia. Others believed the tales of Ahmed Ozdojev, a well-dressed Ingushian, about the town of Varna at the Black Sea and other nearby resorts.

"I know everybody there and will help you buy land cheaply," was Ozdojev's main message, according to investors.

Investors unconcerned about Ozdojev's prison record

So Estonians started to throw money in the wind. There were those who withdrew all retained profits from their small business and invested it in the Bulgarian real estate market, hoping to earn millions in profit.

Surprisingly, no-one seemed to care that Ozdojev had recently been released from prison where he had spent several years for involvement in organized extortion when attempting to take over one food industry at the end of 1990s.

Anyone could have done a simple background check and found from the Internet a few articles published at the end of 1990s that said that Ozdojev who was being charged at the time was the leader of the Ingushian mafia

in Estonia. However, none of the businessmen said they were bothered by the criminal record of their partner. On the contrary, they hinted that this was even a benefit to go into the new market with such hardened partners since you don't beat up your own guys.

In Varna, Ozdojev had set up contacts with Jahia Hashiev who, according to the Bulgarian media, is the leader of the Chechen criminal group in the Varna area.

The background of Hashiev is so colourful that one could turn it into a blockbuster movie. Among others, he has served years in prison for extensive VAT fraud, and is claimed to have links to the top people of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) who have invested large amounts of money in the real estate market of Eastern Europe. In addition, his partners include people who the Bulgarian law enforcement agencies suspect of organizing prostitution, drug business, extortion and smuggling of weapons.

Hashiev who is escorted by five bodyguards was arrested again by the Bulgarian police in March 2010, has been charged of extortion and is waiting trial.

Things started to move quickly for Estonians who had followed the advice of Ozdojev and travelled to Varna with wads of cash. Companies were set up in Bulgaria and, just in a few days, various land parcels with houses or sometimes simply fields were registered to their names.

It were the Chechens who selected land parcels and negotiated prices with sellers. In some cases they also became co-shareholders with Estonians in the companies set up in Bulgaria. According to local journalists, the new business partners of the Estonians were well-known in Bulgaria as members of a criminal gang.

The Chechens asked top price from the Estonians

The scheme how the Chechens operating in Varna filled their pockets with cash from Estonians was simple. Depending on the amount of possible investment, they chose the lots or developments and told the sellers to write into sales contracts prices that were several times higher than actual prices.

Among others, they bought for Estonians lots near the Ignatievo village that is of

suspect value and is inhabited with gypsies. They paid sellers 2 euros per square metre, although the price stated in the contract was 18 euros.

"Locals believe that they were laundering money, but it could actually have been simply a scam against Estonian partners," said Rositsa Penkova, a journalist in Varna who helped Äripäev with the story. It is unusual in Bulgaria to show a higher than the actual price in the contract. Those keen to evade taxes are doing the contrary, showing a smaller price.

These land transactions for Estonians were masterminded by Umalt Osmaev who was a close associate of Hashiev and who himself became a co-shareholder with the Estonian in Družba-3.

One of the land sellers told a Varna journalist later that he could not understand why they wanted to buy his land since it was impossible to build anything on it.

"They were buying the land to re-sell it at a profit," said the local resident who sold his property.

Several Estonians who had been attracted to invest in the Varna area can tell similar stories. One person who wants

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уажва

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ÄP TAUST

How the article was prepared

- ▶ Äripäev spent over six months investigating business connections of criminals and Estonian businessmen in Bulgaria.
- ▶ We started to investigate the case on the information found in the Bulgarian business registry last year that the business partners of several Estonian businessmen who had a business in Varna were persons who were known as members of local Chechen criminal gangs.
- ▶ The investigative article of Äripäev is based on information collected from many sources in Bulgaria and Estonia, various documents and data from the Bulgarian registers.
- ▶ We also used materials published in the Bulgarian press about the local Chechen criminal gang who had had contacts with the leaders of the Irish Republican Army (IRA).
- ▶ In collecting information, we were assisted by two Bulgarian journalists.
- ▶ The preparation of the article was financed by the European Fund for Investigative Journalism (www.journalismfund.eu)
- ▶ The same fund supported the preparation of an extensive article on money laundering in Bulgaria whose traces also came to Estonia. The article was published at the beginning of this year by Äripäev.

to help Estonians who got scammed in Bulgaria and who knows well different organised crime groups said that one in ten people who get scammed dare to speak out. The rest hope for a miracle or are simply afraid. Also he himself wished to remain anonymous.

Speaking of Ingushian criminals in Estonia, he said that their representatives may not be among the ten most influential criminals in Estonia, but they are famous for such scams.

„There are claims that the local Ingushian gang in Estonia and the Bulgarian Chechen gang are linked. This claim is being made by people who have been successful in business and those who have had problems with them. But it must be said that these people - Ingushians and Chechens - are quite arrogant,” he added.

It should also be added that the Bulgarian investigative journalist who works in a local media company and helped us with the case said when Äripäev asked to describe Hashiev that Hashiev was too dangerous and preferred to remain anonymous.

What is the secret of Ozdojev that he has managed to scam so many Estonians and why did he generate such trust? Those who have met him say that he is a good communicator, but also mention prominent (Es-

tonian) businessmen who, according to Ozdojev, were in business with him.

Data from Bulgarian registers and websites shows that the company of Ozdojev is linked to the company of Andres Saame, founder of Hansabank, that is involved in large development in Golden Sands near Varna. Another person linked to this project is Härmo Värk, former CEO of Sampo Pank.

Prominent businessmen created trust

Äripäev sources said that Ozdojev emphasised in all possible times his joint business with Saame and Värk.

Värk admitted to Äripäev that he had met Ozdojev. Hearing that Ozdojev had attracted several Estonians to Bulgaria and mentioned the names of Värk and Saame as his partners, Värk starts to laugh and says that he did not know about such advertising.

But there are also other prominent Estonians involved in the real estate business in Varna. Bankruptcy trustee Andres Hermet and notary Aivar Mesikäpp have business interest there. “I have met Ahmed Ozdojev, but he did not take us there directly nor recommended any partners. Since he was also in Estonia,

we simply discussed matters,” says Mesikäpp.

In several companies where Ozdojev is a partner, there are two Estonians who should be mentioned: Ahti Lille, former prominent tax official was convicted for accepting a bribe, and Gunnar Urb, owner of Seiklusjutte maalt ja merelt, a well-known pub in Tallinn. The latter is the brother of Pille-Triin Urb, wife of Ozdojev who himself lives in an apartment in Kadriorg that belongs to Urb.

Gunnar Urb did not wish to answer Äripäev questions saying that they were biased. Also Pille-Triin Urb did not wish to comment his husband.

Ozdojev himself that he has not brokered any real estate projects to Estonians. He claims that he does not Andres Saame and Härmo Värk, although Värk says otherwise. He also denies knowing Jahia Hashiev.

Investors who Ozdojev attracted to Bulgaria to invest in local real estate say that it was Ozdojev who set up contacts with Hashiev. It is claimed that Ozdojev and Hashiev are now in conflict since the money that Estonians were paying for property did not always reach Ozdojev.

Ozdojev helps Saame to do business



► Andres Saame

Foto: Raul Mee

Ahmed Ozdojev, an Ingushian who lured Estonians into Bulgaria and into the arms of the local organised criminals, has in a strange way also become a cooperation partner of a company that belongs to Andres Saame, a founder of Hansabank. Namely, the company owned by Ozdojev and Ahti Lille, a former high-ranking tax official convicted of bribery, is selling luxury apartments co-developed by Saame.

The apartment building known as Amfora Palace is located in the Golden Sands near the Black Sea not far from the town of Varna.

About three years ago it was acquired together by Toompeamaja in which Andres Saame has a large shareholding and by Satnam Europe, an investment company managed by Härmo Värk, former CEO of Sampo Pank, that invests the funds of a limited number of wealthy foreign investors into Estonia and elsewhere in Europe.

The purchase of this lucrative waterfront development under lucid trees is shrouded by secrecy.

Estonians who do business in the Varna area claim that Ozdojev spent months in looking for buyers for this development.

This means that someone had to arrange a meeting between the Ingushian, Saame and Värk, but this is where the information ends.

Saame is quiet and his business partner fiddles

Einar Entsik, a long-time business partner of Saame and the managing director and one of the owners of Amfora Palace, at first denies that the purchase deal was mediated by Ozdojev.

When we asked him about the claims that Ozdojev helped the deal to succeed, Entsik decided to leave things open: „Frankly, I would not comment at all about the identity of the person who gave us information. Let's leave it this way.“

According to Entsik, they were looking for specific investment possibilities and received all kinds of offers.

Do you know Ahmed Ozdojev? „I more or less know everyone who does something in this area,“ said Entsik who is keen to say nothing specific.

Rositsa Penkova, a journalist based in Varna, described Amfora Palace as follows: „It

is located in the park of Bulgaria's most famous resort, Golden Sands. Theoretically, buildings works in the national park are illegal and it is

incomprehensible how Amfora Turs (the company that owned the development before the Estonians – editor) succeeded in securing the building title and destroy many trees.“

After Estonians took over the development with 137 apartments, they badly needed a partner to manage the sale of apartments. Under contact information, the website of Amfora Palace has an e-mail address, a Skype number, etc. of Baltic House. The owners of Baltic House are Ozdojev and his business partner Ahti Lille. Strangely, Ozdojev denies knowing either Saame or Värk and says that he has only read about them from the papers. However, according to one source, it was none other than Ozdojev who proposed to Saame and Värk that apartment sales could be handled by Lille.

The claims of the Äripäev source are verified also by Härmo Värk himself. „I have met Ozdojev, but I don't really know him or his business or other activities. I know that he is a partner of Ahti Lille. But I cannot really say what Baltic House or Ozdojev specifically do,“ says Värk.

Like Ozdojev, also Lille has had problems with law. In 2005 a court judged found Lille guilty of having accepted

over 300,000 kroons in bribe as head of the first North department of the investigation arm of the Tax and Customs Board. The court sentenced him into prison for four months. We now found Lille in Bulgaria selling apartments belonging to a company of prominent Estonian businessmen.

Also Lille starts to fiddle

At first Lille tries to evade the questions about Amfora Palace, but finally admits that „there is a cooperation contract between business enterprises Baltic House and Amfora Palace that are both incorporated in Bulgaria.“

Entsik has no criticism to Lille. When asked how he met Lille, Entsik says that when you start doing something in one area, you will develop a circle of contacts and Lille was one of those persons who live there.

Entsik summarises the whole discussion as follows: „We are not very public persons, as you have seen. We don't have any major announcement. Yes, we have been developing it for a few years now. At this pace there will be another two or three years, and that's it.“

Speaking about his business partner Andres Saame, Entsik said that it would be futile to contact Saame since he was not commenting anything anyway.

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"Hašiev is a small shifty guy, but a good communicator"

An Estonian who invested in the Varna area in Bulgaria and agreed to give us an interview if we did not disclose his name talks about his conflict with Ahmed Ozdojev and meetings with Jahia Hashiev.

The following is the interview with this Estonian real estate developer.

How did it happen that you started to operate in Bulgaria and how did the problems start?

I am slightly embarrassed since I have been a fool myself. It started when Ahmed Ozdojev invited one of my friend to Bulgaria and I and my friend started a business there. One day when I was sitting in Varna in a restaurant, Ozdojev entered a neighbouring restaurant and invited me to his table. I knew him by face and had seen him on a plane. He told me that he is Ahmed and offers all Estonians who operate in Varna his assistance for a fee. In other words, he was offering a racket and said that nothing happens without him.

I gave him three reasons why I planned to pay him on money: first, it was the way to do business in early 1990, not today. Secondly, I have never paid a cent to any crook and, third, he may want to get money from the Estonians, but I am a setu, not an Estonian. He said that he understood and added that I would undoubtedly rethink...

Is Ahmed Ozdojev one of the leaders of organised criminal group in Estonia or in Varna?

A mob leader?! Have you seen him? He is an ordinary jerk.

So there is someone in Estonia who is his boss?

Yes, Dikajev. Haron Dikajev is his boss, the actual leader of the Chechens. Ozdojev is just an ordinary nut in this system. I have heard from Estonians who have purchased something from Bulgaria and Ozdojev was asking 10% holding in everything. He claimed that he knows the situation

and protects everybody. What a joke. I never paid him a cent.

But how did Ozdojev know about your business in Bulgaria?

It was through one of my companies, Rahe Bul. Moreover, you can count the Estonians who realistically do something in this region on the fingers of one or two hands. We had said hello to each other before.

How did the problems in your Bulgarian business arise?

My mistake was to buy two apartments in Bulgaria and since he (Ahmed Ozdojev - editor)... Well, now it becomes exciting! Since I was lazy and did not wish to spend all my time in Bulgaria and two prominent businessmen had purchased a large complex there and Ozdojev was somehow involved...

Are these two persons who have an apartment building near Varna Andres Saame and Härmo Värk?

Yes, they purchased a large complex on the Golden Sands near Varna. And then they somehow put Ahti Lille, former high ranking tax official who had been sentenced to prison, in charge. I don't know how, but must have been through Ozdojev. Ozdojev is such a soft guy, a slippery chap and does not look like a crook at all. I was always laughing that while in the old days crooks were carrying golden neckchains, he had replaced it with a shiny laptop computer.

What does Ozdojev look like?

Well and expensively dressed, undoubtedly paid for money he has stolen from his customers. So no jumpsuit as in the old times. Dressed all in white, like those big crooks usually do.

So you bought these two apartments in the building owned by Saame and Värk?

No, it was a different location. But the reason why I started to talk about Saame and Värk was that they employed Ahti Lille who was recommended to them by

Ozdojev. Lille had just been released from prison and I met him in the town. He talked normally and said that he has no future in Estonia after spending time in prison and that he is now selling apartments in the building of Saame and Värk and is doing a honest job.

He was the only Estonian who was living there constantly for months. I was planning to sell my two apartments and thought that if Värk and Saame trusted Lille, and they are normal white people, so can I. I agreed with him that he would get 10% of the sale price if he sold the apartments. We set up a separate company and I registered the apartments to the name of the company and he became member of the board. There was a clause that apartments can be sold only if shareholders agree.

What happened then is worthy of a movie script, but it is fact that Ahti Lille sold these apartments and kept the money. He forged my signature as owner, went to the notary and sell them. Later, when I heard about it, I met him in Bulgaria. He came together with two goons and said that the thing was that Ozdojev had taken the money away so I need to speak with Ahmed.

He claimed that Ahmed had told him to give him the money. I taped this conversation. I told him that I had no intention to keep listening this imbecile talk and said that I was going to the police. Then they got scared and asked me not to go and seek a different solution, perhaps buy some cheap land parcel and... I went to the police nevertheless. Bulgarian courts are working very slowly, but surely. The case was for six month investigated and is now in the prosecutor's office as it was determined that the signatures on the sales contract were not mine.

Have you after that communicated with Saame and Värk?

After I found out I called Einar Entsik, CEO of their company, and warned them about Lille. I thought that such normal people as Saame and Värk do not hire crooks, but I was wrong.



► Jahia Hašiev.-

You were blinded by prominent relations of Ahti Lille?

Yes, I was a fool myself that I believed him. Lille told me that Saame and Värk had told him that they had property in different countries and that Lille could become a sales manager if everything goes well in Bulgaria. A nice prospect, his eyes were gleaming. I was thinking myself that a normal person would be unlikely to risk all that.

What did Saame and Värk do after your warning?

Their CEO Einar Entsik thanked me, but said that their situation was different since the apartments were covered by a bank mortgage and every transaction involves a bank representative.

Entsik added that he should find someone else, but that Ahti Lille had been in Bulgaria for a long time and was well informed. He said that they would strengthen supervision over him, but would hardly fire him.

Six months have passed and I don't know what has happened in the meantime. At least a month ago Lille was still living in their house. So he probably keeps selling and is simply under stricter control.

Let's talk about Rahe Bul where you have a holding. How did the associates of Hashiev end up in business with you?

Ozdojev established a contact between me and Hashiev, but I don't have not had such problems with Hashiev as I have had with Ozdojev and Lille.

You have met Hashiev?

Oh yes.

He offered that let's do business together?

It came up in the conversation, but basically it was him who offered it.

Are criminals controlling the real estate market in Varna? How is it possible that so many Estonians have been trapped by them?

No, it's an urban legend and a fairy tale. Simply there are acquaintances, Ozdojev meets them and tells them that he knows the people, controls the situation, promises the cheaper prices in exchange of 10% holding in their companies. People who are in Bulgaria for the first time listen to him with mouths open. Instead of threatening you, they are sweet-talking.

Rahe Bul has purchased land south of Varna at the Black Sea. What is the situation with this land?

The construction has been frozen for a year.

And Matiko-2000, the company founded by Hashiev, is still your partner?

Yes, they have 25%. It was 50%, but they sold half.

To you?

No, to other Estonians.

To whom?

My principle is that if it is a normal Estonian, then I will not identify them for the press without him knowing it. It would not be polite.

You have another company there in Bulgaria - Est Estate.

Yes. It owns a land parcel in Varna, without buildings. It is simply waiting its time.

Your partner there is bankruptcy trustee Andres Hermet.

Yes, he is a very normal person, we know each other for years.

Aren't you afraid that you could lose your whole investment?

No. As for Hashiev, he owns 25% of Rahe Bul, but there are laws that offer enough protection.

But he has damaged your business already by fiddling prices when buying the property?

This is the time when I should look into the mirror.

May I ask how much you invested in Bulgaria?

The two apartment alone cost over 100,000 euros.

But including the land?

I am embarrassed to say the number.

What kind of a man is Jahia Hashiev?

He is a small shifty guy, but a good communicator.

He is also dressed in white, like Ozdojev?

Absolutely, from head to toe and in white suit. A golden ring, the whole works.

Friendly?

Yes, friendly, these days they are all friendly.

Is is moving about with a bodyguard?

Of course. He has five of them.

Should the Estonians who have a conflict with Hashiev or Ozdojev be worried about their life?

They can threaten them that if you don't do like they say, they would never leave Bulgaria alive, and some may have been afraid. Estonians can be easily intimidated if they don't understand that these crooks are still afraid of the police.

Ahti Lille: I did not steal, I was helping

Äripäev asked Ahti Lille for comment to claims that he had allegedly stolen the two apartments. Lille denied that he had sold the apartments behind the owner's back and kept the money. He sent his responses to our questions by e-mail.

Categorical answer to your question is that I have not forged any signature. If any of your sources claim it, I suggest that you obtain a verified copy of an expert study report which says that I have forged anything. Such an expert study report cannot simply exist. The person who is accusing me now asked me to help him to sell the miserable apartments in question. He told me that he had decided to buy these apartments and made a downpayment for them under the influence of local wine and felt very



► Ahti Lille

bad about his weakness. In parallel he wished to acquire one prospective property. I have personally helped him and arranged for assistance in solving both issues.

This same person had overestimated his potential finances and was unable to finance the property fully. This was the reason why Tallinn Invest (the company of

the Estonian who accuses Lille of scam) lost a lot of money in both 2008 and 2009. At the same time the economic climate continued to worsen and finding free funds in this period was very complicated for many investors.

As to the claim of your source that there is a criminal case opened, I understand that the authorities are simply checking the application, instead of carrying out a criminal procedure. Perhaps I have misunderstood, but before a criminal procedure can be opened, there should be a crime.

Värk: I know Ozdojev

As a person, Ahmed Ozdojev was calm and smiling. We met because you are there in this country and you know that people have an office there and you meet them. We also needed bridgeheads and wanted to study who does what and how. I learned about Ahti Lille when Einar Entsik already knew him, since Entsik was initiating this project. Let's say that we (Satnam Europe - editor) were invited to invest there through the office of Einar Entsik and Andres Saame. I believe that we ma-



► Härmo Värk

de the decision together. But they had information that there was an investment opportunity before us. I know that Ahti Lille has had some problems, but the fact that he has been in prison is news to me. You learn to know a person when managing and running the project, but Ahti is generally in charge of sales and is not involved in finances.

► Horre Saluste ja Kristjan Metsur.
Foto: Raul Mee

“There simply is no money left”



Horre Saluste and Kristjan Metsur who together with Chechens founded Družba-3 in Bulgaria say that they started to speculate with real estate in the hope to earn big profits, but actually made a massive loss.

Interview with Horre Saluste and Kristjan Metsur.

How did you discover the real estate business in Bulgaria?

Horre Saluste: „We had surplus funds. We invested it and lost it.“

Kristjan Metsur: „There were many new contacts and in the course of the discussion with different businessmen we came to the idea that Bulgaria was a nice place and we should go there to see whether we can do something.“

Saluste: „Real estate speculation was our idea. The principle was very simple: buy cheap and sell at a high price.“

How much money do you have tied up in these investments?

Saluste: „A few million kroons for several lots near the town of Varna near the Black Sea.“

You still have these lots that you have purchased?

Metsur: „It’s not possible to sell anything there.“

Saluste: „There is no market of buyers. Foreigners have gone away. Essentially, they created a bigger real estate bubble that in Estonia.“

Metsur: „We will inherit it to our children, as say some people who have also invested there.“

Do you have business partners in Bulgaria?

Metsur: „Yes, of course.“

How did you find them?

Metsur: „In the course of meeting different people and this is how the contacts developed.“

Saluste: „Land deals. My neighbour in Kadriorg had large-scale real estate investments there. He practically lured as there. It seemed like a good investment. If I recall then we did it in a grand manner - we withdrew a lot of cash from the bank, flew there with over 100,000 euros in pockets, paid money and got the title to the land.“

Who selected the lots?

Metsur: „Let’s say that local real estate businessmen and some of them became land co-

owners together with us. But their objective was somewhat dubious. They controlled prices so well that we could not understand whether they realistically invested any money there or not. In principle, they used our money to become co-owners.“

Why did you not evade them? Do they control the whole region?

Metsur: „Well, the whole sales information is under their control. It was difficult to get directly to sellers in good locations.“

Saluste: „We did not know the market. The question was whether to trust or not. Many Estonian businessmen have lost their money when they do business in an unknown place alone. Therefore we saw this as the only option.“

But someone mediated you the local contact in Varna?

Saluste: „No, we already had this contact from Estonia.“

Metsur: „He had been doing business there for years.“

Who was that person?

Metsur: „I will not name him.“

Was he Ahmed Ozdoyev?

Saluste: „Yes“.

The people who were your partners in Bulgaria are well known in Varna as mobsters. Does this come you as a surprise or did you check their background?

Metsur: „It is not very surprising. We have heard something like that ourselves.“

So you simply stumbled on wrong people.

Saluste: „Well, a wolf does not touch a neighbour... Probably something like that. Our relations were actually very good. There was no problem with lack of trust.“

Are they attempting to scam you out of your money?

Saluste: „Why? There simply is no money any more.“

Umalt Osmaev, member of the local Chechen gang who is also your partner in the local company Družba-3 did the land deals himself for you, didn’t he?

Saluste: „Well, basically yes“.

Metsur: „I think that there is no point for them to scam us. They simply earned skyhigh brokerage fees from every land deed. If they even are crooks, they are attempting to

become regular businessmen. They did not extort us for our money, we communicated entirely normally. But we were not the only businessmen. I will not name any names, but there are some known and some unknown Tallinn businessmen who invested there through the same people in the same way.“

Saluste: „Very solid and honest people.“

Metsur: „We had examples and there was no reason to fear that we could start running errands for mafia or become mafia debtors or victims of extortion.“

You just mentioned that you were suspecting that the local partners themselves invested nothing in these transactions.

Metsur: „This suspicion arose only after the transactions.“

Are these people somehow frightening also?

Metsur: „No, we still communicate with them very nicely. We can talk about anything.“

Saluste: „They are neighbours“.

So you have no fear that

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Ozdoyev denies everything

In a telephone interview to Äripäev, Ozdoyev denied that he was linked to Jahia Hashiev and that he had mediated real estate to Estonians.

The man refused to meet us, saying that he had no interest in talking about his activities.

Is it true that you are involved in real estate business in Bulgaria?

Yes, I am.

Do you offer or also sell to Estonian businessmen local projects and an opportunity to invest in them?

I don't do that. We have our own interest there, but we do not broker.

When and how did you end up there?

But I have been there for a long time. I have business partners in Moscow, so it was through then.

Let's meet and talk about it in more detail?

There is no point.

Why?

I have no interest to meet you and to talk about my activities.

Do you know Andres Saame and Härmo Värk?

I don't know them, I have been reading about them in the papers.

We were said that in Bulgaria you work together with local Chechens who are led by Jahia Hashiev. Do you know him?

No, I don't know him. There are many different people, but I don't know Jahia Hashiev.

You have not met him?

Bulgaria is a large country, not like Estonia. There are different regions.

I am talking about Varna

I don't communicate with them.

But everybody who want to do real estate business in Varna must pay Hashiev?

There is no such thing, this is nonsense. I don't know where did you get such information.

How is it doing business in Bulgaria? Do you have business partners there?

I have a Moscow partner there, but we have a different scope, we are more in industry. We send products to Russia.

You have a company Baltic House. What does it do?

Food products.

And Ahti Lille is your business partner in it?

Ahti Lille is involved in selling real estate.

How did you meet Ahti Lille?

He was looking for work



► Ahmed Ozdoyev.-

and arrived in Bulgaria. I know people in the real estate business.

Do you know that Ahti Lille has a criminal sentence from the time when he was employed in the tax board?

I did not know that. He has not mentioned it.

In Bulgaria you and Gunnar Urb have a company by the name of EstBulg. Is it involved in the real estate business?

It used to, but now it's economic crisis and the company has no business. I see that you are very well informed.

Of course, I have already talked to a lot of people. You have even been claimed to be a prominent member of mafia.

(laughs) It's not true.

But you were criminally punished in 1990s?

(laughs) I was then small, made a mistake. I made a small mistake.

You were claimed to be a subordinate of Haron Dikajev.

You know, I have been no-one's subordinate and will never become anyone's subordinate. You have wrong information. Dikajev is my countryman, we communicate with him, but nothing more.

But do you know about the investigation that has been opened for the activities of Ahti Lille in Bulgaria?

About what investigation?

He is claimed to have sold two apartments of an Estonian by a scam?

I doubt that.

So you know nothing about a scam?

Local laws are not worse than Estonian laws. If he scammed anyone, let them investigate. Well, it was nice talking to you, but my time is up. All the best!

they could fool you out of your money.

Metsur: „They took an exceptionally large brokerage fee, and we don't even know how big it was, but that was what they did... So, in this way they fooled us, but...”

Did they become co-shareholders by their own will?

Metsur: „We could have been the only shareholders, but we wanted to expand this circle and wanted them to be our business partners and help us to sell the lands later. Let's say that it was partly our wish that they became business partners.”

Saluste: „We saw that they had so much influence and many contacts. Regionally, it is always better to do business with people like that than with people who don't know anything about nothing and have no influence.”

But what about their criminal past?

Metsur: „We did not know that. We did not go anywhere to police and could not have understood local Bulgarian newspapers even if they had written about it. If we had known it, we would not have been buyers.”

You have also other partners, a fashion businessman Uno Kaseväli and advertising businessman Peeter Pullerits. How did they find you?

Saluste: „We dragged them in in good faith, like we were dragged in ourselves. But they did their decisions themselves.”

What will you do now? Wait for better times?

Metsur: „Yes.”

Saluste: „Why take out some 100,000 to 200,000 if you have invested 5 million in it.”

So you invested 5 million in total?

Saluste: „The amount paid for this land could total 5 million. But there are Estonians who have lost notably larger amounts there.”

In the same area in Varna?

Metsur: „They are also going about Tallinn and curse.”

Saluste: „Ahmed has mentioned a lot of names to us.”

And he was the person who had contacts there and who invited Estonians to invest there?

Saluste: „He was our so-

called local salesman there. Ahmed operated in Estonia and brought businessmen over.”

But were you not alarmed by the background of Ahmed Ozdoyev? He has also been convicted in Estonia and in the second half of 1990s was claimed to have been the leader of the Ingushian mafia.

Saluste: „But perhaps it was more secure. Then no-one will hit any more.”

Metsur: „These are not 1990ies any more where issues were resolved by men in jumpsuits with knives or guns in BMWs. They are moving in real business transactions and it is no longer that when you arrive with the money, they hit you in the head, rob your money and throw you in a trench.”

And what happened with this money then?

Metsur: „This is not our business any more. Why probe him that hey, where are you going to place it? After all, we were not sauna buddies sitting behind a beer and a shashlyk, asking them what they planned to do with the money. We were their good business partners and were able to do things quickly.”

Can you say that your local partners were looking for simple-minded gold-diggers who were willing to give their money to these guys whom they had not background checked?

Metsur: „We did not give them the money. We went to a notary and gave the money to sellers.”

They simply handled your business?

Metsur: „Yes, they drew up papers and... Of course, they are not going to help us to sell the land and we must ourselves start looking for buyers. Selling is not yet reasonable.”

Saluste: „It's probably a good time to buy land because it is very cheap there now.”

Metsur: „Yes, if the Estonian businessmen have faith, it would be a good time to buy. Some people who need money urgently are now selling lands there at a very reasonable price.”

And do you recommend to use the same contacts there?

Metsur: (laughing - editor) „Everyone should choose his or her own contacts. We are not going to recommend anyone.”



Jahia Hašiev

► He is claimed to be the leader of the Chechen organised criminal group in the Varna region in Bulgaria. He has spent the majority of years in prison and in the last decade spent about six years in prison for involvement in large-scale VAT fraud. In March 2010, Hashiev was again arrested with suspicion of extortion.
► He is believed to have inherited his position as leader of the local criminal

Chechens from Abdul Patajev who was murdered in the second half of 1990s. An assassination attempt was made several years ago on Hashiev, but he survived. Bulgarian journalists have linked Hashiev and his associates with the Irish Republican Army (IRA). In addition to IRA, Hashiev is believed to have been in business with the father and son Veselin and Hristo Danev who has had influential relatives in the Bulgarian ruling elite.

Veselin's father Hristo Danev who died some time ago was a constitutional judge and former Minister of the Internal in Bulgaria. Danevs are being charged in organising prostitution and in other crimes. Hashiev has also done business with Radoslav Kaltchev who is known in Varna as a drug dealer by the name of Black Rod.
► Hashiev has also been the local boxing club. According to Estonians, Hashiev is always escorted by several bodyguards.

Tsonka Stantševa

► Wife of Jahia Hashiev. Serves on the supervisory and management boards

of companies that Hashiev controls.

Ufalt Osmaev

► He is the business partner of Jahia Hashiev and his wife. Osmaev had a joint business also with Abdul Patajev who

was alleged to have been the boss of the Chechen criminal gang in Varna before he was killed at the end of 1990s.

Matiko-2000 (legal entity)

► Company founded by Jahia Hashiev that, according to a Varna-based journalist, has made over 100 real estate deals. It is claimed that at first transactions with properties are always made

between companies and persons linked to Hashiev and only then move to new owners. The company's CEO Stefan Karaivanov is Jahia Hashiev's business partner. At present Karaivanov

is being investigated together with Hashiev under extortion suspicion. Matiko-2000 is owned by Tsonka Stantcheva, wife of Hashiev, and someone named Antoanete Tomova.

Ettevõtte Družba-3 OOD (legal entity)

► The company is registered in Varna and is co-owned by Estonian businessmen and Ufalt Osmaev. In 2007 it acquired a lot of land in the Ignatievo village about 15 km from Varna. According to the local journalist, the land in question is of low value and the only positive side is relative proximity to Varna. In addition to Osmaev, Družba-3 belongs to the following Estonians:
► Kristjan Metsur, who is one of the owners of Estonian company Aqualife that attracted media attention when consumers complained

that its salesmen were using dishonest methods for selling its water filters. In addition, Metsur has for years been a real estate broker, most recently for Agenda Kinnisvara.
► Horre Saluste is the chairman of several small companies and an actor. Among others, he is a board member in Aqualife where Metsur has a shareholding. Saluste also performs children's theatre plays.
► Uno Kaseväli is a personal acquaintance of Saluste and Metsur and has for years been in the fashion business.

He is also one of the heroes who in early 1990s defended the Tallinn

TV Tower from the Soviet army units.

► Peeter Pullerits who is also an acquaintance of Saluste and Metsur is in the advertising business.
► Temporarily, the list of shareholders of Družba-3 included also Erki Noorak, head of the local land authority of Rae municipality near Tallinn. He later sold his holding to Horre Saluste. Noorak has been head of the local land authority since 2001. Until 2002 he belonged to the supervisory boards of two land surveying companies. In March the court bailiff auctioned his house and property in Kiili municipality. The property has a 8.4 million kroons mortgage for Marfin Pank.

Rahe Bul OOD (legal entity)

► The company is registered in Varna and 25% of its shares are owned by Matiko-2000 (initially Matiko-2000 owned 50% of Rahe Bul, but later it was sold to Estonians).
► Rahe Bul acquired from Matiko-2000 about 3000 square metres of land about 50 km south of Varna at the seaside town Biala. In 2007 when the transaction was made the board of Rahe Bul included Estonian Raul Rannu who owns the company also Stefan Karaivanov who is linked to Hashiev and is currently under criminal investigation together with Hashiev. By now the company's management board has been replaced, but Äripäev was unable to obtain information about the new managers.
► In addition to Matiko-2000, the shareholders of Rahe Bul at the time of the land deals was Gregori and Partner, a company of And-

res Heliste and Raul Rannu, that had Silver Eensaar as board member.
► Heliste became known in Estonia when he shortly before its bankruptcy became CEO of the media business of Oliver Kruuda, the owner of Estonia's two large food industries. Eensaar is the long-time lawyer of Julianus Inkasso, a debt collection agency. He has been linked to the business of Endel Siff, one of Estonia's richest persons. When Siff sold his holding in oil business N-Terminal to a secret investor, Eensaar became member of the supervisory board of N-Terminal and the CEO of the buying company. Before its went bankrupt, Eensaar managed L.Rei, the company or Rein Kilk who owns a string of food producers. Eensaar is also the only member of the board of Julianus Grupp.



► Kristjan Metsur



► Horre Saluste



Est Bul Invest (legal entity)

► Est Bul Invest OÜ was founded in Estonia in 2007. its owners were Andres Heliste, Raul Rannu, Bruno Braun who were linked to Rahe Bul and also well-known bankruptcy trustee Andres Hermet. Hermet is Estonia's wealthiest bankruptcy trustee. He is the only bankruptcy trustee who has been in the Äripäev List of Top 500 Richest People in Estonia. In last

year's list Hermet placed 429 with 70 million kroons in assets. Bruno Braun is a businessman in Jõgevamaa who owns several timber companies.
► Together with one Bulgarian company they set up Est Estate OOD that at present owns an empty lot in the town of Varna.



► Andres Hermet

Ahmed Ozdojev



► Estonian businessmen say that Ozdojev is a salesman who invited Estonians to invest in real estate in the Varna region in Bulgaria. It is claimed that Ozdojev cooperated with Jahia Hashiev which is why people linked to Hashiev became business partners of Estonians who were investing in Varna. He himself denies such links. According to one source, the two men are now in conflict with each other.

► Ozdojev himself spent several years in prison for

organized extortion and taking over a mayonnaise factory from brothers Pereskopovs. The media claim that ten years ago Ozdojev was one of the members of the powerful local mafia treasury and the leader of the local Ingushian criminal gang. Other source claimed to Äripäev that this was a media speculation and that he has never been so influential.

Ahti Lille

► Business partner of Ahmed Ozdojev. In Bulgaria Lille and Ozdojev are co-shareholders in Baltic House OOD. Lille is former high-ranking official of the Estonian Tax and Customs Board who in 2005 was caught when accepting

300,000 kroons in bribe and was sentenced to prison. After being released from prison, Lille became a partner of Ozdojev in Bulgaria and was employed as real estate salesman by a company linked to Andres Saame, a founder of Hansabank. Lille resides most of his time in Bulgaria.



► Ahti Lille

Evelin Vihtol

► She is the co-habitant of Ahti Lille from the time when Lille was charged of accepting a bribe. Vihtol was caught together with Lille as mediator of the bribe. Both were found guilty. At present Vihtol is a shareholder in two companies which are half-owned by Kalev Uustalu, head of the national heritage authority. Another 50% is co-owned by Evelin, Eve and Helen Vihtol.

► In the past she was supervisory board member in AS Goodmani Grupp that was liquidated in 2003 and where she served on the board together with Terje Taal who was co-habitant of Janek Klais (known as Martin Raud), a notorious arm and drug dealer.

Amfora Palace

► Amfora Palace is a complex of apartments that is about 17 km north of Varna at the heart of Golden Sands, next to the area's largest waterpark. The company has 137 apartments of different size and a car park under the building. According to the company's website, most of the apartments in the building are unsold, while 47 apartments have been sold and 17 have been booked.

merged with Forekspank to form Optiva Pank.

► Since December 2006 until April 2010 Värk was managing real estate investment company Satnam Europe that belongs to Rathbone Jersey Ltd., an investment company registered in the Channel Islands. Last autumn the company's owner changed and it adopted a new name St. Anne's Trustees Ltd, that is registered on the Guernsey island.

► Einar Entsik is minority shareholders in Toompeamaja with 20% of shares.

► This year Härmo Värk was replaced as executive of Amfora Palace by Ruben Gornischeff who also became CEO of Satnam Europe and who earlier handled development projects for Uus Maa real estate company. Satnam Europe cooperates, among others, with Paul Oberschneider. Recently they together borrowed 50 million euros from Swedbank to refinance their businesses.



► Andres Saame

Gunnar Urb

► Business partner of Ahmed Ozdojev in Estonia and in Bulgaria. According to Äripäev, Gunnar Urb is the brother of Pille-Triin Urb who is wife of Ozdojev. The two men co-own

Estbulg OOD in Bulgaria and Mikro Kinnisvara in Estonia. One of the companies of Gunnar Urb is Seiklusjutte Maalt ja Merelt, a well-known Tallinn pub.

Pille-Triin Urb

► Wife of Ahmed Ozdojev. He works in the Mikro Kinnisvara that belongs to Ahmed Ozdojev and Gunnar Urb. Her name and telephone number is listed on the company's website under contacts. In the past she has been in the board of several companies, including several years in management of OÜ Piimamees that belongs to Tarvet

Vaik, partner of pop singer Mike Emelai, a convicted drug dealer. Vaik spent over four years in prison and was released in 2007. Until 2005 Urb belonged to the management board of OÜ Mendelsoni Elamisinnad, a company owned by prominent real estate businessman Toomas Mendelson.

Kristoff Invest

► Aivar Mesikäpp is a prominent notary who is a shareholder in the Bulgarian company Kristoff Invest that was registered in June 2007. In the same year it acquired real estate near Varna from Matiko-2000, a company linked to Hashiev. Other shareholders of Kristoff Invest are Karol Muul and Hindrek Hermlin.

► Mesikäpp started his business as a notary at the beginning of 1997. There are no companies in Estonia where he is a shareholder, but Muul has represented a company that formally belonged to Laivi Mesikäpp, wife of Aivar Mesikäpp. Neither Muul or Hermlin have been particularly active in Estonian business.

Meelis Trading

► A company registered in Varna with the same address as Amfora Palace. It belongs to Meelis Rihvk who is co-founder of Amfora Palace.

► In Varna there is a company that has been registered to the same address as Amfora Palace and belongs to Meelis Rihvk who is one of the founders of Amfora Palace.

► Together with Meelis Kubits, one of Estonia's best-known

PR men, Meelis Rihvk is a shareholder in OÜ Hemstock that was sold to Martin Soni Grupp. The latter belongs to Priit Pihelpuu who the tax board has suspected of large-scale tax scam and has made a formal investigation. Pihelpuu has maintained low profile for years and avoided media attention. Eesti Ekspress weekly has written about his connections to Meelis Lao, a good friend of

founders of Hansabank and a man who has been repeatedly alleged to have links to mafia circles in Estonia. It was claimed that in 1990s Lao provided security services to owners of Hansabank and defended them from extortion by various criminal groups. Pihelpuu's mother Maie has featured in the Äripäev Rich List since until end of 2009 she was formally owner of Martin Soni Grupp.



► Amfora Palace