

Hizb ut-Tahrir activists arrested in St Petersburg as terrorists

HRWF (15.11.2016) – The fight against Hizb ut-Tahrir is going on unabated in Russia. In the cases Kasymakhunov and Saybatalov v. Russia (Applications nos. 26261/05 and 26377/06) and Hizb ut-Tahrir and Others v. Germany (Application no. 31098/08), **the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Hizb ut-Tahrir is not a religious group but a political movement.** See HRWF Report "Religion, Violence and Human Rights: the European Court and Hizb ut-Tahrir" (<http://bit.ly/2fSBosX>).

Six suspects in Hizb ut-Tahrir St. Petersburg cell case remanded in custody

Interfax (19.11.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2fthO6e> - A court in St. Petersburg has ordered that six suspects in a criminal inquiry opened into the establishment and functioning of the city's cell of the *Hizb ut-Tahrir* terrorist organization, outlawed in Russia, be remanded in custody.

"Six people were remanded in custody on Wednesday under the ruling issued by the Kirovsky District Court of St. Petersburg," St. Petersburg City Court spokesperson Darya Lebedeva told *Interfax*.

A source in law enforcement agencies told Interfax earlier that the suspects in this criminal case, opened under Part 1 of Article 205.5 of the Russian Penal Code (arrangement of the activity of a terrorist organization outlawed in Russia) included three natives of Dagestan, born 1981, 1982 and 1988, a native of Tajikistan, born 1985, and another two persons born 1985 and 1991.

The source also said that electronic data storage devices and printed materials, including a book by *Hizb ut-Tahrir* ideologist Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, issues of the *Al-Wa'ee* magazine and other items included in Russia's federal list of extremist materials, were confiscated from the suspects' apartments, the source said.

The Russian Federal Security Service's (FSB) branch for St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region said on Wednesday that people had been detained in the city on suspicion of being involved with the local cell of the *Hizb ut-Tahrir* terrorist organization. It did not say how many people had been detained.

The press service of the FSB regional branch told Interfax earlier that nine people had been detained at different times as part of criminal cases opened into participation in *Hizb ut-Tahrir*. Seven of them have already been convicted.

The Russian Supreme Court designated *Hizb ut-Tahrir* as a terrorist organization and banned its activity in Russian territory on February 14, 2003.

Hizb ut-Tahrir members detained in St. Petersburg

Interfax (08.11.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2ftg90g> - Officers of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) have identified and detained further members of the St. Petersburg cell of the *Hizb ut-Tahrir* terrorist organization, outlawed in Russia.

"These persons were detained as a result of a series of search operations on November

8, 2016. A restraining measure is now being selected for them," the press service of the FSB branch for St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region said on Tuesday.

This detention was made as part of an earlier launched criminal investigation into the establishment of this banned terrorist organization's cell in St. Petersburg, it said.

It did not say how many people had been detained.

The press service of the FSB regional branch told *Interfax* earlier that nine people, among them seven with previous convictions, were detained in St. Petersburg at different times as part of criminal cases opened into participation in *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, which is outlawed in Russia.

The press service also said that Sergey Yablokov and Roman Ivanov were detained in June 2014. Other persons suspected of being involved with this *Hizb ut-Tahrir* cell - Gapur Magomedov, Makhmadimin Saliyev, Karim Ibragimov and Eldar Ramazanov - were detained at the same time. Dmitry Mikhailov and Isa Ragimov were detained on similar counts in April 2015, and Ilyas Kagirov was detained in June 2015.

Criminal inquiries were launched into their uncovered activities based on a count of 'organizing a terrorist organization's activity'.

In August 2015, the Moscow District Military Court convicted Magomedov and Saliyev and gave them five-year prison sentences. At the end of March 2016, Yablokov and Ivanov were sentenced to 12 years and six months and 13 years and four months, respectively, in a high-security prison.

Ibragimov, Ramazanov and Kagirov were convicted in August 2016, receiving prison terms of 17, 16 and five years, respectively.

Hizb ut-Tahrir was founded in Palestine in 1953. Its supporters call for the overthrow of the governments in Central Asian republics and the creation of an Islamic caliphate on their territory. Russia and other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have designated *Hizb ut-Tahrir* as a terrorist organization, unlikely the United States and Western Europe countries, where *Hizb ut-Tahrir* acts unhindered.

Hizb ut-Tahrir members have taken the most active part in provocations against Muslims, including by involving them in attempts to stage coups in Syria, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and other countries.

The Russian Supreme Court designated *Hizb ut-Tahrir* as a terrorist organization and banned its activity on Russian territory on February 14, 2003.

Opinion of HRWF

Human Rights Without Frontiers considers that *Hizb ut-Tahrir* is not a terrorist organization, at this stage it is not a violent movement in its deeds and currently it does not advocate violence. However, it calls for the violent destruction of the state of Israel and for the banishment and killing of its inhabitants. It also calls the governments of Islamic states evil and illegitimate, and can hereby provide a convincing argument for those who want to overthrow them. Its radical discourse also inspires other Islamic

groups using violence to overthrow the current governments of states with Muslim majorities.

Hizb ut-Tahrir shares the same global totalitarian ideology and the same objectives as other violent religiously-rooted political movements: to impose a totalitarian system of governance based on a dominant religion in territories under their control. This theocratic political ideology directly threatens states and the international human rights system on which democracy and the rule of law are based.

Human rights movements consider that state repression against Hizb ut-Tahrir is unjustified, inappropriate and even counter-productive. Others perceive it as a danger to the human rights system and democratic societies as it aims to extend its totalitarian ideology to the world.

Human Rights Without Frontiers considers that brutal state repression against Hizb ut-Tahrir is not the right answer because it fuels anger and increased opposition. Only criminal activities must be prosecuted. Banning Hizb ut-Tahrir is not a solution as it can pursue its activities underground.

A number of states and civil societies concerned about or confronted by the Islamic totalitarian ideology promoted by Hizb ut-Tahrir and other groups that deny in theory and in practice the fundamentals of the international human rights system because it is not rooted in Islam feel in a situation of self-defense. They consider it is both their right and their duty to defend their values and their citizens, to anticipate the possible future dangerousness of such groups and to combat them before they get out of control. Yet, they must fight with democratic means and the weapon of law if they do not want their policies to be inefficient or even counter-productive.