

## RUSSIA

**Jehovah's Witnesses, Said Nursi Followers and the Church of Scientology** do not use or advocate the use of force nor violence in their teachings, and their aim is not to overthrow the political regime in place. Nonetheless, they are prosecuted on the basis of the “**Law on Fighting Extremist Activity**”, originally adopted in 2002 but amended in 2006 in such a way that removed the necessity for alleged violators to be associated with extremism, violence or calls to violence.

This opened the door for arbitrary and unrestrained interpretations of the concept of extremism, which enabled the criminalization of religious activities carried out by non-Orthodox minority groups. This move was criticized by the UN Human Rights Committee (28 April 2015), the PACE Monitoring Committee of the Council of Europe (14 September 2012), and the Venice Commission (1 June 2012), which called on Russia to correct the law, by making an element of violence or hatred a requirement for prosecution.

### Jehovah's Witness

#### **Dennis CHRISTENSEN**

**Date of birth:** 18<sup>th</sup> December 1972

**Date and place of arrest:** On 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017, in the town of Oryol

**Charges:** Participating in extremist activities

**Article of the criminal/ civil/ administrative code:** Criminal Code Article 282.2 Part 1 (Organisation of an extremist organisation, or of extremist activities)

**First court decision:** The Sovietsky District Court ordered him to be held in pre-trial detention for two months. He appealed against his detention.

**Last court decision:** On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017, his appeal was denied by Oryol Regional Court.

**Place of detention:** Krasnoarmeiskaja 10, SIZO-1, City of Orel, 302040, Russia

**Other information:** He is a Danish citizen. He was arrested by armed officers from the FSB after attending a meeting of the Jehovah's Witnesses, alongside some 50 other worshippers who were later released without charge. The raid and arrest came after Russia's Supreme Court banned the Jehovah's Witnesses in April over alleged extremism. This is the first time that a Jehovah's Witness has been jailed since the Soviet Union.

*Source:* <http://bit.ly/2qAOmhc> , <http://bit.ly/2rk49SS> , <http://bit.ly/2rDXWUF> , <http://bit.ly/2rjWSIX> , [http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2290](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2290)

### Scientologists

#### **Sakhil ALIEV**

**Date and place of arrest:** On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017, in St. Petersburg

**Charges:** Participating in an extremist organization, illegal business, inciting hatred and enmity, and violation of human dignity

**Article of the criminal/ civil/ administrative code:** Criminal Code Article 171 (Illegal commercial activity without registration) and Articles 282 and 282.1 (Organizing an extremist organisation or of extremist activities)

**Last court decision:** On 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017, he was sentenced to two months pre-trial detention.

**Other information:** He was arrested alongside Anastasia TEREENTIEVA, Galina SHURINOVA, Ivan MATSITSKIY and Konstanci ESAULKOVA.

*Source:* <http://www.osce.org/odihr/324976?download=true> , <http://bit.ly/2rgWMPm>

### **Ivan MATSITSKIY**

**Date and place of arrest:** On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017, in St. Petersburg

**Charges:** Participating in an extremist organization, illegal business, inciting hatred and enmity, and violation of human dignity

**Article of the criminal/ civil/ administrative code:** Criminal Code Article 171 (Illegal commercial activity without registration) and Articles 282 and 282.1 (Organizing an extremist organisation or of extremist activities)

**Last court decision:** On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017, he was sentenced to two months pre-trial detention.

**Other information:** He was arrested alongside Anastasia TEREENTIEVA, Galina SHURINOVA, Sakhil ALIEV and Konstanci ESAULKOVA. He was also an applicant before the European Human Rights Court in the case *Church of Scientology of St. Petersburg and Others v. Russia*.

*Source:* <http://www.osce.org/odihr/324976?download=true>

### **Galina SHURINOVA**

**Date and place of arrest:** On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017, in St. Petersburg

**Charges:** Participating in an extremist organization, illegal business, inciting hatred and enmity, and violation of human dignity

**Article of the criminal/ civil/ administrative code:** Criminal Code Article 171 (Illegal commercial activity without registration) and Articles 282 and 282.1 (Organizing an extremist organisation or of extremist activities)

**Last court decision:** On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017, she was sentenced to two months pre-trial detention.

**Other information:** She was arrested alongside Anastasia TEREENTIEVA, Sakhil ALIEV, Ivan MATSITSKIY and Konstanci ESAULKOVA. She was also an applicant before the European Human Rights Court in the case *Church of Scientology of St. Petersburg and Others v. Russia*.

*Source:* <http://www.osce.org/odihr/324976?download=true>

### **Anastasia TEREENTIEVA**

**Date and place of arrest:** On 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017, in St. Petersburg

**Charges:** Participating in an extremist organization, illegal business, inciting hatred and enmity, and violation of human dignity

**Article of the criminal/ civil/ administrative code:** Criminal Code Article 171 (Illegal commercial activity without registration) and Articles 282 and 282.1 (Organizing an extremist organisation or of extremist activities)

**Last court decision:** On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017, she was sentenced to two months pre-trial detention.

**Other information:** She was arrested alongside Sakhilb ALIEV, Galina SHURINOVA, Ivan MATSITSKIY and Konstanci ESAULKOVA. She was also an applicant before the European Human Rights Court in the case *Church of Scientology of St. Petersburg and Others v. Russia*.

**Source:** <http://www.osce.org/odihr/324976?download=true>

### **Sunni Muslims/ Said Nursi Followers**

#### **Ilgar Vagif-ogly ALIYEV**

**Place of residence:** Izberbash

**Date and place of arrest:** On 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017, in the city of Izberbash in Dagestan

**Charges:** Holding "classes involving a group of adherents of [Nurdzhular]"

**Statement of the defendant:** He says that such an organisation [Nurdzhular] does not exist and denies engagement in extremist activity.

**Article of the criminal/ civil/ administrative code:** Criminal Code Article 282.2 Part 1 1 (Organizing an extremist organisation or of extremist activities)

**Place of detention:** Investigation Prison in Makhachkala

**Other information:** He is held in pre-trial detention.

**Source:** [http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2279](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2279)

#### **Ziyavdin DAPAYEV**

**Date of birth:** 12<sup>th</sup> May 1982

**Place of residence:** Mahachkala

**Date and place of arrest:** In March 2016, Mahachkala

**Charges:** Involvement with the banned Nurdzhular organisation

**Statement of the defendant:** He says that such an organisation [Nurdzhular] does not exist and denies engagement in extremist activity.

**Article of the criminal/ civil/ administrative code:** Criminal Code Article 282.2 Part 1 1 (Organizing an extremist organisation or of extremist activities) and part 2 (Participation in an extremist organisation).

**First court decision:** At the end of December 2016, Makhachkala's Soviet District Court extended his detention until 4<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

**Last court decision:** The first full hearing took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017 at Makhachkala's Lenin District Court. There have been eight hearings so far, the most recent on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

**Place of detention:** Investigation Prison No. 1 in the Dagestan capital Makachkala

**Other information:** He was detained alongside, Artur KULTUYEV, his brother Sukhrab KULTUYEV, and fourteen other people on suspicion of involvement in a Nurdzhular organisation. Most of those were released after questioning. While Sukhrab KULTUYEV and Artur KULTUYEV were placed under travel restrictions, DAPAYEV remained in custody. His name has been added to the Rosfinmonitoring list of "terrorists and extremists".

*Source:* [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2166](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2166) ,

[http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2270](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2270) ,

[http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2290](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2290)

## **Andrei DEDKOV**

**Date of birth:** 16<sup>th</sup> June 1979

**Place of residence:** Krasnoyarsk

**Date and place of arrest:** On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2016, in Krasnoyarsk

**Charges:** Involvement with the banned Nurdzhular organisation, organising a "cell of adherents", and holding study groups at various addresses in Krasnoyarsk between 25<sup>th</sup> May 2015 and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016

**Statement of the defendant:** He says that such an organisation [Nurdzhular] does not exist and denies engagement in extremist activity.

**Article of the criminal/ civil/ administrative code:** Article 282.2 Part 1 (Organizing an extremist organisation or of extremist activities)

**First court decision:** In late December 2016 or January 2017, his detention was extended until March 2017 by a Krasnoyarsk court.

**Place of detention:** Krasnoyarsk's Investigation Prison

**Last court decision:** His first hearing at the city's Soviet District Court has been delayed twice (on 18<sup>th</sup> April and 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017), and he will next appear on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017, according to the court website.

**Date of release:** He was held in pre-trial detention for almost a year, until 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017, before being placed under travel restrictions ahead of his trial.

**Other information:** This is the third time Dedkov has faced charges related to the Nurdzhular movement. Dedkov appears on the Rosfinmonitoring list of "terrorists and extremists". Prison authorities have not allowed Dedkov to pray, as this "is a violation of internal regulations".

*Source:* [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2166](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2166)

[http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2251](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2251)

[http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2270](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2270)

[http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2279](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2279)

## **Bagir KAZIKHANOV**

**Age:** 31 years

**Place of residence:** Ulyanovsk

**Date and place of arrest:** On 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014, and then again on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015, in Ulyanovsk.

**Charges:** Creating a cell of a banned Nurdzular organisation and participating in its activities

**Statement of the defendant:** He says that such an organisation [Nurdzhular] does not exist and denies engagement in extremist activity.

**Article of the criminal/ civil/ administrative code:** Article 282.2 Part 1 (Organizing an extremist organisation or of extremist activities)

**First court decision:** On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015, he was sentenced to three-and-a-half-years to be served in a general-regime correctional colony by Lenin District Court in Ulyanovsk.

**Last court decision:** On 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015, Judge Maksim Maksimov of Russia's Ulyanovsk Regional Court upheld the three-and-a-half-year prison term.

**Other information:** He was arrested alongside Stepan KUDRYASHOV and Aleksandr MELENTYEV. KAZIKHANOV was the first reader of the works of the late Turkish Islamic theologian, Said Nursi, to receive a jail sentence in Russia since September 2013.

*Source:* [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2066](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2066)

[http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2046](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2046)

## **Yevgeny KIM**

**Date of birth:** 5<sup>th</sup> October 1974

**Date and place of arrest:** On 26<sup>th</sup> December 2015, in Blagoveshchensk of the Amur Region

**Charges:** Disseminating the religious ideas of the international religious association Nurdzhular, fully aware of the fact that... [it] had been recognised as extremist and its activities prohibited on the territory of the Russian Federation. The charges claimed that his speeches at his meetings ‘were aimed at inciting religious hatred’, promoted the ‘superiority of the Turkic peoples’, and contained ‘negative evaluations’ of Armenians and Russians.

**Statement of the defendant:** He says that such an organisation [Nurdzhular] does not exist and denies engagement in extremist activity.

**Article of the criminal/ civil/ administrative code:** Criminal Code Article 282.2 Part 1 (Organizing an extremist organisation or of extremist activities)

**First court decision:** On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016, a full hearing took place with an unknown outcome.

**Last court decision:** On 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017, he was sentenced to three years and nine months in an ordinary-regime correctional colony by Blagoveshchensk City Court. His imprisonment is to be followed by one year of “restrictions on freedom”. During this time, he will not be allowed to move or travel outside his place of residence without permission, and may have to report regularly to probation authorities.

**Place of detention:** Blagoveshchensk’s Investigation Prison

**Other information:** His time in detention before and during the trial, amounting to nearly 18 months, will be subtracted from his sentence. He intends to appeal against his conviction. He is on the Rosfinmonitoring list of "terrorists and extremists".

*Source:* [http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2250](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2250) , <http://bit.ly/2m4omww>  
[http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2270](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2270) ,  
[http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2279](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2279) ,  
[http://forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2290](http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2290)