

RUSSIA: No discrimination in the repression of religious minorities

Another Jehovah's Witness held accountable for possession of forbidden materials in Karachay-Cherkessia

SOVA (21.11.2016) – <http://bit.ly/2fUHQK> – The prosecutor's office reported the opening of a case on the basis of article 20.29 of the Code of Administrative Violations of Law against a follower of the Jehovah's Witnesses from the village of Kurdzhinovo.

On 21 November 2016 the prosecutor's office of Karachay-Cherkessia reported that an administrative case had been opened on the basis of article 20.29 of the Code of Administrative Violations of Law (possession of extremist materials for purposes of mass distribution) against a resident of the village of Kurdzhinovo, Urup district, Svetlana Kordiyaka. It was reported that the case was sent to a magistrate's court for consideration.

The prosecutor's office pointed out that an inspection conducted jointly with the department of FSB border guards and the Center for Combating Extremism of the republican directorate of the Russian MVD showed that Kordiyaka possessed forbidden materials with the goal of distribution among Jehovah's Witnesses and other citizens. Just what kind of materials were referred to was not reported.

We recall that in October 2016, another resident of Kurdzhinovo, Nadezhda Geraskova, was held accountable on the basis of the same article for distribution of Jehovah's Witnesses' materials.

In 2012 the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in

Kurdzhinovo was fined for possession of extremist materials.

We consider the prohibition of Jehovah's Witnesses' literature and prosecution of believers for its distribution to be illegal and we consider these actions of the authorities to be religious discrimination.

Russian lawmaker revives talk about anti-sect laws: Senator thinks it is necessary to formalize the term "destructive sect" in law

TASS (17.11.2016) – <http://bit.ly/2gXZxza> – The vice-chair of the Federation Council's Committee on Constitutional Legislation and State Building, Elena Mizulina, declared the necessity of working out a package of draft laws aimed at combating destructive public associations and religious sects.

"I propose discussing the possibility of creating a working group which would conduct work on improving legislation in this area and would prepare a package of draft laws which provide a systematic approach to solving this problem," Mizulina said during a round table in the upper chamber of parliament.

The senator also thinks that the term "destructive sect" should be formalized legislatively. "It is necessary to introduce into legislation the status of organizations (sectarian organizations—TASS note) that cause harm to people, although it is difficult," she emphasized. At the present time, the senator recalled, there are no such concepts as "sect" and "destructive sect" in Russian legislation."

She said that up to 500 sects are active on Russian territory in addition to many psychic training groups and classes in personal growth, which in her opinion also may have a negative impact on the individual's psyche.

"It disturbs us that there are many of these sects in the regions of Russia, while their activity bears an underground,

very secretive nature,” she added. “In 2015-2016 alone, 52 sectarian organizations were liquidated on the basis of court decisions in 24 constituent elements (subjects) of the Russian federation. Something is amiss in the legislation and organization of monitoring of such organizations,” the lawmaker concluded. In connection with this, the senator continued, it is necessary to deal systematically with the problem of combating destructive sects.

In Kemerovo, a Pentecostal pastor was fined for ‘illegal’ missionary activity

HRWF (01.12.2016) – In the city of Kemerovo, the pastor of the New Generation Church was fined forty thousand rubles by the authorities.

On 17 October 2016, the District Court of Kemerovo released a statement regarding Andrei Matyuzhova, the pastor of the New Generation Church. He was accused of being guilty of violating part 4, Article 5.26 of the Administrative Code (missionary activity in violation of the law regarding freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and religious associations). Andrei did not notify the administration nor registered with the authorities regarding the establishment of his church from which he also performed and published his sermons via Internet.

Earlier, a Ukrainian citizen, who visited the New Generation Church, and who congratulated Andrei Matyuzhova’s Wife on her birthday in public was also fined for this act.

Source: [Sova Center](#)

Translation/adaptation for HRWF by Scot and Olga Allen

In Naberezhnye Chelny, a court banned the activity of the Church of Scientology

HRWF (01.12.2016) – The court of Naberezhnye Chelny banned any activity of the Church of Scientology in the premises of their meeting house as a result of violations of the fire safety rules.

On 10 October 2016, the Court of the City of Naberezhnye Chelny approved the request by the prosecutor's office to forbid the Church of Scientology from operating in their meetinghouse on Naberezhnochelninsky Avenue, 54.

The reasons put forward are alleged "violations regarding fire safety and anti-terrorist activities".

Earlier, the prosecutor's office of the Republic of Tatarstan closed another meetinghouse belonging to the Jehovah's Witnesses on the same grounds.

Source: [Sova Center](#)

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