

**Notice:** Undefined index: et\_header\_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public\_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

**Notice:** Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public\_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

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**Notice:** Undefined index: et\_template in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public\_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1216

**RUSSIA : Putin has a new great data base of religious (and non-religious) “extremists”**

**Putin has a new great data base of religious (and non-religious) “extremists”**

*Both books or pamphlets and individuals will be included in a mammoth Orwellian list of targets for exclusion and repression.*

By Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (26.08.2022) – <https://bit.ly/3cqc10Q> – On July 14, 2022, Vladimir Putin signed a new Russian law on the creation of an “Information database of extremist materials.” The document provides for the creation of a state information system to “ensure operational-search activities and investigative actions carried out as part of countering extremist activity, and organizing preventive measures aimed at preventing it.”

Lists of extremist materials already exist in Russia, and include the publications of the Jehovah’s Witnesses and other religious minorities, as well as brochures critical of the Russian Orthodox Church and the government. The creation of a national data base kept at the Ministry of Justice should make it easier to crack down on such publications nationally.

The law goes beyond written material, though, and extends to persons. It calls for “a unified register of information about persons involved in the activities of an extremist or terrorist organization.” The list should include everybody “who was a founder, member of a collegial governing body, head, deputy head, head of a regional or other structural unit, deputy head of a regional or other structural unit, participant, member, employee of an extremist or terrorist organization.” It is stated that these “extremists” may not be candidates in any Russian election, but obviously the list will be used for other purposes too.

Any “participant” or “member” in organizations declared “extremist,” including the Jehovah’s Witnesses and several pro-democracy group, will be included in the national list.

Russian law regards as “extremists” not only organizations that practice or advocate for violence. It is enough to promote “anti-social” discourses and, in the religious field,

to advocate for the “superiority” of a religion with respect to others, which in practice means trying to convert members of the Russian Orthodox Church and other “traditional” religions.

*Photo: Putin with Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church. Credits.*

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**Massimo Introvigne** (born June 14, 1955 in Rome) is an Italian sociologist of religions. He is the founder and managing director of the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR), an international network of scholars who study new religious movements. Introvigne is the author of some 70 books and more than 100 articles in the field of sociology of religion. He was the main author of the *Enciclopedia delle religioni in Italia* (Encyclopedia of Religions in Italy). He is a member of the editorial board for the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* and of the executive board of University of California Press' *Nova Religio*. From January 5 to December 31, 2011, he has served as the “Representative on combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, with a special focus on discrimination against Christians and members of other religions” of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). From 2012 to 2015 he served as chairperson of the Observatory of Religious Liberty, instituted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to monitor problems of religious liberty on a worldwide scale.

**Further reading about FORB in Russia on HRWF website**

**Notice:** Undefined index: et\_footer\_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public\_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1266

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