

A sixth Jehovah's Witness accused of extremism behind bars

By Willy Fautré, *Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l*

HRWF (20.05.2018) - On 18 May, one day after the widespread police crackdown against Jehovah's Witnesses called "Judgment Day" in Birobidzhan (Jewish autonomous oblast), the hearing of Alam Aliev took place and the court ruled that he should be kept in pretrial detention through 14 July 2018 and scheduled his criminal case to begin on 22 May.

Jehovah's Witness in Birobidzhan target of criminal case

TASS/ Russia Religion News (18.05.2018) - <https://bit.ly/2KHysvh> - According to materials of the criminal case, a resident of the city of Birobidzhan, in the period from February 2017 to May 2018, he is accused of conducting deliberate, vigorous actions of an organizational character directed at resumption and continuation of the illegal activity of a forbidden religious organization, which had been found in April 2017 to be extremist and its activity banned on the territory of the Russian Federation.

The illegal actions of the suspect were expressed in convening meetings, organizing religious performances, collecting financial resources in the form of donations for the expenses of a religious organization that has been prohibited by a court, and also conducting mass events aimed at distributing extremist literature and materials of extremist contents.

The prosecutor's office has taken control of the investigation of the criminal case.

Punishment for commission of the aforesaid serious crime is provided by the Criminal Code of the RF in the form of a fine of from 400,000 to 800,000 rubles or the total of salary or other income of the convict for a period of from two to four years or incarceration for a term of from six to ten years, with deprivation of the right to occupy certain offices or to engage in certain activity for a period of up to ten years and restriction of liberty for a term of from one to two years.

Operation "Judgment Day" against Jehovah's Witnesses

Russia Religion News (18.05.2018) - <https://bit.ly/2Lir3Ue> - At least 9 searches in homes of local residents who are thought to be Jehovah's Witnesses were conducted on 17 May in Birobidzhan (Jewish autonomous oblast), the European Association of Jehovah's Witnesses reports. One of the operatives participating in the searches said that a total of 150 law enforcement officers are participating in this operation, which has the code name "Judgment Day."

In the process of searches, photographs, bank cards, money, and all electronic equipment (even old and broken things) were taken from the citizens.

Thus far there is no information about which criminal case the searches were being conducted about and on the basis of which article it was opened. However, a criminal case has been initiated against one of the Witnesses, Alam Aliev. He is in custody and his trial is expected for tomorrow.

In the morning of 16 May, a series of searches in homes of citizens who are thought to be Jehovah's Witnesses was conducted in the cities of Orenburg and Buzuluk (Orenburg oblast). According to preliminary information, three citizens were arrested and pledges not to depart were taken from another three. It is known that citizens have been held

as defendants on the basis of part 2 of article 282.2 of the Criminal Code of the RF (participation in an extremist organization).

It is expected that a decision about the measure for insuring appearance for those arrested will be made on 17 May.

On 17 July of last year, the decision of the Russian Supreme Court finding all 396 religious organizations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia to be extremist and banning their activity took legal effect. (tr. by PDS, posted 17 May 2018)