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## **Targeting ethnic Dungan Koran teachers**

***Kordai District Court fined two more ethnic Dungan Muslims seven weeks' average wages each for teaching the Koran to children. The court issued eight such fines between 2018 and 2020, all to Dungan Muslims. More than half the administrative fines for teaching religion to children in Kazakhstan are in Kordai District. Police chief Maksat Erezhepov insists these prosecutions were "in line with the law". "Any actions that contradict the law will face severe measures." Both he and the regional religious affairs official deny any "ethnic factor" in the prosecutions.***

By Felix Corley

Forum 18 (15.04.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3mYOBau> - Despite having less than one percent of Kazakhstan's population, Kordai District of Zhambyl Region, along the southern border with Kyrgyzstan, has seen more than half the prosecutions for "illegal" religious teaching in the whole of Kazakhstan between 2018 and 2021. Two Muslims who taught the Koran to children in their village have been fined so far in 2021, the first on 19 January, the second on 15 March. Both are members of Kordai District's Dungan ethnic minority.

The two men were each fined 100 Monthly Financial Indicators (MFIs), about 7 weeks' average local wage. Zhambyl Region had the second-lowest average monthly wage of Kazakhstan's Regions in the fourth quarter of 2020, according to state statistics.

In addition to the two Muslims fined in Kordai District in 2021 for teaching religion to children, courts fined a further 18 individuals in the first three months of 2021 to punish them for distributing religious literature, texts, videos, audio and religious items in places and ways the regime declares to be illegal under its compulsory religious censorship.

Kayrulla Kushkaliyev, the head of Atyrau regional Religious Affairs Department – which brought six of the prosecutions for posting religious materials online – insisted that he was merely fulfilling the requirements of the Religion Law. "People don't have the right to distribute religious materials in any form whatsoever, whether text, video or audio," he told Forum 18.

Kazakhstan's authorities are known to have brought at least 134 administrative prosecutions in 2020 to punish 129 individuals (one twice), three charities and one company for their exercise of freedom of religion or belief, including for distributing religious materials or teaching religion. Of these, 119 ended with convictions, with 114 individuals (one twice), three charities, and one commercial company being punished.

The two religious education prosecutions so far in 2021 bring to ten the number of known prosecutions of ethnic Dungan Muslims from Kordai District for leading such Koran classes for children since August 2018. The two fined in 2021 are both from the village of Sortobe. The earlier seven Muslims (one of them punished twice) are from the village of

Masanchi. All were identified by police conducting "preventative measures", according to the court decisions seen by Forum 18 (see full list below).

The most recent five were all fined by the same judge at Kordai District Court, Ermek Orazkulov. Kordai District Court told Forum 18 it could not speak to Judge Orazkulov (see below).

Kordai District has a population of about 150,000, of whom about a third are Dungans. The District was the site of ethnic clashes between Kazakhs and Dungans in February 2020, which left 11 people dead and hundreds injured.

"Dungans are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school," a Dungan from neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, who is familiar with the situation in Kordai District, told Forum 18 on 15 April. "All mosques are open to both Kazakhs and Dungans. The only restriction is that the Muslim Board allows sermons only in Kazakh and not in Dungan."

The state has allowed only one Muslim community in the entire country to register: the state-controlled Muslim Board. All mosques must be subject to it to be allowed to exist. Independent mosques and mosques catering mainly to one ethnic group are banned.

In defiance of its international human rights obligations, Kazakhstan bans individuals from teaching their faith to children unless they have state approval.

Maksat Erezhepov, head of Kordai District Police, insisted that these prosecutions for teaching the Koran to children were "all in line with the law". "What these people did was against the law," he told Forum 18. "Any actions that contradict the law will face severe measures."

When Forum 18 pointed out that all ten of those prosecuted since 2018 for teaching the Koran to children were Dungans, Erezhepov denied that their ethnicity was relevant. "There is no ethnic factor" (see below).

Zhangeldi Omarov, head of Zhambyl Region Religious Affairs Department, initially denied that anyone is punished for teaching the Koran to children. Told by Forum 18 of the cases, including the two fines in 2021, he refused to discuss the court decisions. He then insisted that religious teaching is allowed only "in appropriate places – strictly-controlled locations" (see below).

### ***First 2021 fine for teaching Koran to children "without any permission at all"***

On 15 December 2020, police raided a house in the Kordai District village of Sortobe while 23-year-old Sherba Yuburov was teaching religion to children without permission from anyone.

Yuburov was accused of conducting "missionary activity" by teaching the Koran and using religious materials which had not undergone the compulsory prior state censorship of all religious materials.

A case against Yuburov was brought under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 3. This punishes: "Carrying out missionary activity without state registration (or re-registration), as well as the use by missionaries of religious literature, information materials with religious content or religious items without a positive assessment from a religious studies expert analysis, and spreading the teachings of a religious group which is not registered in Kazakhstan". The punishment is a fine of 100 MFIs, with deportation if the individual is a foreign citizen.

"In the court hearing, law-breaker Sherba Yuburov admitted fully his guilt that he committed a violation of the law," the subsequent court decision notes, "and explained that he was teaching the Koran to children of various ages without any permission at all. He regretted what he had done."

On 19 January 2021, Judge Ermek Orazkulov at Kordai District Court found Yuburov guilty and fined him 100 MFIs, about seven weeks' average local wage for those in formal work. Yuburov did not appeal against the decision.

A chancellery official at Kordai District Court told Forum 18 on 15 April it could not speak to Judge Orazkulov. The official refused to discuss the cases of Muslims punished for teaching the Koran and put the phone down.

### ***Second 2021 fine for teaching Koran to children "without any permission at all"***

On 24 February 2021, police raided Kharsan Yasyrov's house also in the village of Sortobe while the 43-year-old was teaching religion to children. Officers drew up a record of an offence against him the same day. It accused Yasyrov of having conducted "missionary activity" by teaching the Koran since September 2020 without permission from anyone.

A case was brought against Yasyrov under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 3. The subsequent court decision uses similar wording as in Yuburov's decision, noting that Yasyrov too admitted his guilt and expressed remorse.

On 15 March 2021, Judge Orazkulov at Kordai District Court found Yasyrov guilty and fined him 100 MFIs. Yasyrov did not appeal against the decision.

### ***"All in line with the law"***

Maksat Erezhepov, head of Kordai District Police, insisted that these prosecutions for teaching the Koran to children were "all in line with the law". "What these people did was against the law," he told Forum 18 from Kordai on 15 April. "Any actions that contradict the law will face severe measures."

Asked why individuals cannot give religious lessons to children provided the parents consent, Erezhepov responded: "They must register, and only then can they do so. Other mosques observe this."

Asked why his officers conduct "preventative inspections", Erezhepov replied: "We conduct inspections all over the District." Asked what such "inspections" were supposed to prevent, he refused to say.

When Forum 18 pointed out that all ten of those prosecuted since 2018 for teaching the Koran to children are Dungans, Erezhepov denied that their ethnicity is relevant. "There is no ethnic factor," he insisted. "All are citizens of Kazakhstan."

Told that his District, with less than one percent of Kazakhstan's population, prosecutes more individuals for teaching religion to children than the whole of the rest of Kazakhstan, Erezhepov said he did not believe it. He then put the phone down.

Zhangeldi Omarov, head of Zhambyl Region Religious Affairs Department, initially denied that anyone is punished for teaching the Koran to children. However, told of the cases Forum 18 was investigating in Kordai District he then insisted that such teaching is allowed only "in appropriate places – strictly-controlled locations".

Asked why individuals should be punished for giving religious lessons to children with parental consent, Omarov told Forum 18 from Taraz on 15 April: "We don't discuss court cases – that is a matter for the courts."

Asked why all ten of those punished since 2018 for such religious education are ethnic Dungans, Omarov replied: "Who's a Dungan, who's a Kazakh, who's a Russian – they're all citizens. There's one law for all." Asked why more than half of prosecutions since 2018 in the whole of Kazakhstan for those teaching religion have occurred in one District of Zhambyl Region, Omarov asked where Forum 18 received its information. Told that Forum 18 had reviewed many court decisions, he did not respond.

### **Ten fines since August 2018**

List of ethnic Dungan Muslims from Kordai District punished by Kordai District Court under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 3, for teaching children to read the Koran without state permission:

- 1) 15 March 2021, Kharsan Yasyrov from Sortobe, 100 MFI fine
- 2) 19 January 2021, Sherba Yuburov from Sortobe, 100 MFI fine
- 3) 5 November 2020, [Sherbane Geisyrov from Masanchi](#), 100 MFI fine
- 4) 22 October 2020, [Shisyr Ur from Masanchi](#), 100 MFI fine
- 5) 13 October 2020, [Nikhar Usyrov from Masanchi](#), 100 MFI fine
- 6) 27 August 2020, [Abdumalik Chiakhunov from Masanchi](#), 100 MFI fine
- 7) 23 September 2019, [Yakub Kelir from Masanchi](#), 100 MFI fine
- 8) 24 July 2019, [Shisyr Ur from Masanchi](#), 70 MFI fine
- 9) 6 August 2018, [Aidir Kharsanov from Masanchi](#), Article 490, Part 1, Point 1, and Article 490, Part 3, 150 MFI total fine and a ban on activity
- 10) 6 August 2018, [Zarina Manu from Masanchi](#), Article 490, Part 1, Point 1, and Article 490, Part 3, 50 MFI total fine and a ban on activity

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## **"People don't have the right to distribute religious materials in any form whatsoever"**

***Courts fined at least 18 people in 2021 for distributing religious literature, texts, videos, audio and items in places and ways the regime declares illegal under its compulsory religious censorship. Most fines were of three weeks' average wages. "People don't have the right to distribute religious materials in any form whatsoever, whether text, video or audio," insists Kayrulla Kushkaliyev of Atyrau's Religious Affairs Department – which brought six prosecutions. The UN Human Rights Committee found an import ban on ten Jehovah's Witness publications violated Polat Bekzhan's rights.***

By Felix Corley

Forum 18 (09.04.2021) - <https://bit.ly/2QvMwQx> - Courts have fined at least 18 people in the first three months of 2021 for distributing religious literature, texts, videos, audio and religious items in places and ways the regime declares to be illegal under its compulsory religious censorship. Only one of the individuals, Council of Churches Baptist Nikolai Novikov – who was offering religious literature for free on the streets – had his fine overturned on appeal.

Most of the fines were of 35 Monthly Financial Indicators (MFIs), about three weeks' average wages for those in formal work, according to the court decisions seen by Forum 18. (A full list of the 18 known cases is below.)

Six of the prosecutions – all of people who had posted religious materials on their social media accounts – were in the western city of Atyrau on the Caspian Sea. Kayrulla Kushkaliyev, the head of the regional Religious Affairs Department – which brought the prosecutions – insisted that he was merely fulfilling the requirements of the Religion Law. "People don't have the right to distribute religious materials in any form whatsoever, whether text, video or audio," he told Forum 18 (see below).

The prosecutions continue as the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee found that the regime's censorship system caused a violation of the rights of Jehovah's Witness Polat Bekzhan and his colleagues in a decision made public on 26 March. The then Agency of Religious Affairs (now the Religious Affairs Committee in the Information and Social Development Ministry) banned the import of ten Jehovah's Witness magazines in 2012.

The UN Committee "considers that the freedom to prepare and distribute religious texts or publications forms part of [Bekzhan and his colleagues'] right to manifest their beliefs and that the refusal to permit the importation of the religious publications constitutes a limitation of that right".

The Committee also observed that the censorship requirements set out in the Religion Law "is also problematic in light of [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights] Article 19, which guarantees 'freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers'."

The UN Committee said Kazakhstan should "review its legislation, regulations and practices" to ensure that such a violation cannot recur and inform it within 180 days of what steps it will take (see below).

A Foreign Ministry official told Forum 18 that Kazakhstan would respond to the UN Committee "in a timely manner" on "the measures undertaken to give effect to the Views" (see below).

### ***Tight state-imposed religious censorship***

Kazakhstan imposes [tight restrictions on religious literature and other materials](#). Religious literature is subject to compulsory pre-publication censorship and – together with icons, pictures and jewellery with religious inscriptions - can be distributed only in state-approved venues. Sharing faith with others without state permission is also banned.

Article 9, Part 2 of the Religion Law declares: "Distribution of religious literature, other informational materials of religious content and objects of religious designation is allowed

only in [registered] places of worship, [registered] religious educational organisations as well as in fixed premises specially designated by the local executive authorities."

Article 9, Part 3 allows for the import of religious literature by registered religious organisations only and only after it has undergone state censorship by the Religious Affairs Committee (part of the Information and Social Development Ministry). Individuals can bring in only one copy of any religious book for personal use only.

President Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev told the journalist Mukhamedzhan Tazabek, in an interview Tazabek posted on his Instagram account on 18 August 2019, that when he had been posted abroad during the late Soviet period, he had [smuggled into the Soviet Union a copy of the Koran and recordings of Koranic suras](#) at the request of his father.

Most of those punished are fined under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3. This punishes: "Violating the requirements of the Religion Law for .. import, manufacturing, production, publication and/or distribution of religious literature and other religious materials, and items for religious use". The punishment for individuals is a fine of 50 MFIs, about one month's average wage for those in formal work.

Of the at least 134 administrative prosecutions in 2020 to punish 129 individuals (one twice), three charities and one company for their exercise of freedom of religion or belief, 88 were to punish activity related to sharing religious materials. In three cases in 2020, courts [ordered seized religious books to be destroyed](#).

The regime also imposes tight restrictions on all meetings for worship. State permission is needed for a community to be allowed to meet and the location of any meeting also needs state permission.

Courts have [continued to hand down fines in 2021](#) to punish the exercise of freedom of religion or belief, including on those conducting meetings for worship, saying the word "Amen" aloud while praying in mosques, and teaching their faith.

### ***UN Committee: Censorship requirements in Religion Law "problematic"***

On 26 March 2021, the United Nations Human Rights Committee communicated to Kazakhstan and made public its findings ([CCPR/C/130/D/2661/2015](#), adopted on 30 October 2020) that Kazakhstan violated the rights of Jehovah's Witness Polat Bekzhan – chair of the Jehovah's Witness organisation in the country – by refusing permission for the community to import ten religious publications in 2012.

The then Agency of Religious Affairs – which then operated the country's compulsory prior censorship of all published or imported religious literature – claimed the ten publications "reject the fundamental teachings of traditional Christianity", discouraged secular education and "can cause family breakup". Jehovah's Witnesses failed to overturn the ban through the courts and Bekzhan lodged a complaint to the UN Human Rights Committee in 2015.

The Committee noted the vagueness of the Agency's criticism of the publications and said that the ban on importing literature "interferes with the right to freedom of religion". It added that it "considers that the freedom to prepare and distribute religious texts or publications forms part of [Bekzhan and his colleagues'] right to manifest their beliefs and that the refusal to permit the importation of the religious publications constitutes a limitation of that right".

The Committee went on to note that although limitations are allowable in narrowly-

defined circumstances, Kazakhstan has not shown "that this limitation of the right to manifest religion is proportionate to a legitimate purpose that it might serve".

"The reasons given for disapproving the importation of some of the [Jehovah's Witness] publications suggest there is ample room for disapproval for arbitrary or other prohibited reasons, such as disagreement by the State or other religions with the religious principles expressed in the literature," the Committee pointed out. "Furthermore, religious freedom is particularly necessary to protect the rights of those who adhere to unpopular beliefs."

The Committee considered that Kazakhstan "failed to justify the restrictions on the manifestation of the authors' religion, and concludes that the refusal of permission to import the religious publications in question is contrary to the freedom to manifest one's religion, and it therefore amounts to a violation" of the rights of Bekzhan and his colleagues.

The Committee also observed that the censorship requirements set out in the Religion Law which could lead to such literature import bans "is also problematic in light of [ICCPR] Article 19, which guarantees 'freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers'."

The Committee concluded by instructing Kazakhstan to remove the restrictions on importing the ten publications, give adequate compensation to Bekzhan and his colleagues, and "review its legislation, regulations and practices" to ensure that such a violation cannot recur. It asked Kazakhstan to inform it within 180 days of "the measures taken to give effect to the present Views".

A Foreign Ministry official, who asked not to be named, told Forum 18 from the capital Nur-Sultan on 9 April that Kazakhstan has 240 days to inform the Committee "on the measures undertaken to give effect to the Views" from the date of receipt of 26 March. "60 additional days are provided in light of the COVID-19 pandemic", the official noted.

"The pertinent Kazakhstan state authorities are conducting relevant work and will provide a relevant follow-up reply to the Committee in a timely manner," the official added.

No one at the Information and Social Development Ministry and its Religious Affairs Committee would discuss why the regime imposes restrictions on individuals' access to and right to use and distribute literature and other materials related to religion.

The assistant to Deputy Information and Social Development Minister Marat Azilkhanov – who oversees religious affairs – told Forum 18 on 9 April that he was unavailable in a meeting that would last the rest of the day. Deputy chair of the Religious Affairs Committee Bauyrzhan Bekirov – the only senior official to answer the phone on 9 April – refused to answer any questions. "Ask the Foreign Ministry," he told Forum 18 before putting the phone down.

### ***Punishing posting religious materials online without state permission***

1) On 19 January, Atyrau Specialised Administrative Court fined Almaz Dyusenov 35 MFIs and imposed a ban of three months on unspecified activities under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for posting ten Islamic videos on his Instagram page, 1 in Kazakh and 9 in Arabic. An "expert analysis" found the recordings to be religious. The court decision notes that "it is established in law that distribution of materials of religious content is allowed only in strictly designated locations, of which the Instagram social network is not part".

2) On 16 February, Atyrau Specialised Administrative Court fined Gulmira Aytuganova 35

MFI and imposed a ban of three months on unspecified activities under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for sharing material from the Koran on her VKontakte page.

3) On 16 February, Atyrau Specialised Administrative Court fined Medet Dosanov 35 MFIs and imposed a ban of three months on unspecified activities under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for sharing audio recordings from the Koran on his VKontakte page. An "expert opinion" of the Institute for Analysis of the Religious Situation and Religious Expertise of 25 December 2020 led to his prosecution.

4) On 22 February, Atyrau Specialised Administrative Court fined Shamil Dzhakhparov 35 MFIs and imposed a ban of three months on unspecified activities under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for sharing videos on his Instagram account about "the day of judgment, the holy month of Ramadan, one of the greatest sins – adultery, and on forgiveness", according to the "expert analysis".

5) On 26 February, Atyrau Specialised Administrative Court fined Asylbek Kanatov 35 MFIs and imposed a ban of three months on unspecified activities under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for posting suras from the Koran on his VKontakte page. A 12 January "expert analysis" had found the materials to be religious.

6) On 4 March, Atyrau Specialised Administrative Court fined Bolat Ensepov 35 MFIs and imposed a ban of three months on unspecified activities under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for posting on his Instagram account "sermons on gratitude to Allah, the benefits of faith, dreams, and the fact that everyone needs a Creator". A 12 January "expert analysis" had found the materials to be religious.

7) On 18 March, Satpayev City Court fined Nariman Nurgali 70 MFIs under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 3 for posting religious materials on his VKontakte page.

8) On 29 March, Temirtau Specialised Administrative Court fined Nazary Sadovin 70 MFIs under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 3 for posting Islamic materials on his VKontakte page.

Kayrulla Kushkaliyev, the head of Atyrau regional Religious Affairs Department – which brought six of these prosecutions – insisted that he was merely fulfilling the requirements of the Religion Law. "People don't have the right to distribute religious materials in any form whatsoever, whether text, video or audio," he told Forum 18 from Atyrau on 9 April.

Asked why individuals should be prosecuted for posting information about and their views on religion on their social media accounts, Kushkaliyev responded: "Courts examine these cases and take the decisions. I can't influence court decisions. If we [at the Religious Affairs Department] are violating the law, courts would bring a case against me and my specialists."

### ***Punishing offering religious literature, items for sale online***

1) On 5 January, Oskemen Specialised Administrative Court fined Boris Levchenko 35 MFIs (97,230 Tenge) under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for offering for sale online on the Olx.kz website a small metal cross, which a religious studies expert analysis determined was a religious object. An officer of the police's Department for the Struggle Against Extremism had discovered Levchenko offering the cross online. The court ordered the cross to be returned to him. Despite telling the appeal court that he is a pensioner with a low income and health concerns on 3 February the court left the fine unchanged.

2) On 6 January, Ekibastuz Specialised Administrative Court fined Askhat Kenesbayev 35 MFIs under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for offering for sale online on the Olx.kz website a copy of the Koran "which a religious studies expert analysis determined to be religious". Police had found him offering the book for sale during internet "monitoring". In court, Kenesbayev "acknowledged his guilt and explained that he did not know that it was not allowed to sell the book," the court decision notes. "He had put it up for 30,000 Tenge. He had no money. The book had been left by his mother." The court ordered the Koran to be returned to him.

3) On 14 January, Pavlodar Specialised Administrative Court fined Alyona Aidina 35 MFIs under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for offering a copy of the Koran for sale online on the Olx.kz website. An "expert" reported that the Koran "is religious literature, containing an exposition of the dogmas and precepts of the Muslim religion". The court decision notes that the restrictions on distribution of religious literature as set out in the Religion Law "ban the distribution of such literature by means of placing announcements on the Olx website". The court ordered the Koran to be returned to her.

4) On 12 February, Petropavl Specialised Administrative Court fined Vladimir Kolominsky 35 MFIs under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for offering for sale online on the Olx.kz website a copy of the Koran, which the Religious Affairs Department had found to be "religious literature related to the religion of Islam". The court ordered the Koran to be returned to him.

### ***Punishing offering religious literature, items for sale, without state permission***

1) On 2 February, Turkistan Specialised Administrative Court fined Kumiya Dadanova 35 MFIs and imposed a ban of three months on unspecified activity under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for offering religious materials for sale in a shop in the city's Kuanysh shopping centre. Officials discovered Dadanova offering the religious material for sale on 21 October 2020. An 11 January 2021 "theological examination" (in the words of the court decision) had found the books to be religious. A record of an offence under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 was drawn up on 25 January.

2) On 17 March, Zhanaozen Specialised Administrative Court fined Maksat Dzhamiyev 35 MFIs and imposed a ban of three months on distributing religious literature under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for allowing religious literature to be sold in a shopping centre in the city.

3) On 26 March, Pavlodar Specialised Administrative Court fined Darya Porokhnya 35 MFIs under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for offering for sale on Koran in a shop in the Gulliver shopping centre. The 20-year-old told the court she did not know the Koran is religious. The court ordered the Koran to be returned to her.

### ***Punishing offering free religious materials without state permission***

1) On 18 January, Oral Specialised Administrative Court fined Council of Churches Baptist Nikolai Novikov 35 MFIs under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 for offering religious literature for free on the streets. Police had filmed him offering copies of the New Testament in Kazakh and Russian and Christmas leaflets on 7 January. The books had not undergone a state "religious studies expert analysis", the court decision notes.

However, on 16 February, the appeal court annulled Novikov's fine at the request of the prosecutor, who argued that the police had not provided evidence to the court that the New Testaments and the Christmas leaflets were religious literature, and that the

absence of sound on the police video meant that what Novikov had been saying was impossible to determine. The appeal court ordered the books and leaflets to be returned to him.

### ***Punishing praying, reading religious literature without state permission***

1) On 17 March, Aktau Specialised Administrative Court fined Erbolat Dzhuguniov 50 MFIs under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 3 not only for praying the Friday namaz on 5 March in business premises but for reading religious literature, which the court deemed to be illegal distribution. Officials seized 12 books and 10 calendars, which the court ruled should be "confiscated in favour of the state".

(On 17 and 18 March, the same Aktau Specialised Administrative Court fined Khakimzhan Valishov and Odilzhan Ermetov 50 MFIs each under Administrative Code Article 490, Part 1, Point 1 for joining Dzhuguniov for the Friday prayers on 5 March.)

### ***Punishing trying to import religious literature without state permission***

1) On 19 February, Zhambyl District Court fined Kyrgyz citizen Dastan Kulashev 100 MFIs under Administrative Code Article 453, Part 4 for trying to import one religious book from neighbouring Kyrgyzstan which the Kazakh authorities deem to be "extremist". Court officials told Forum 18 that Kulashev had with him a book by a member of the Kandahlawi family, key figures in the Tabligh Jamaat Muslim missionary movement. The book was banned by a court in Astana in April 2008. They added that Kulashev had not attended the hearings in person, and has not appealed against or paid the fine.

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