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RUSSIA: 2017 prosecutions for religious literature - list

By Victoria Arnold, Forum 18 (<https://www.forum18.org>)

List of 54 known prosecutions under Administrative Code Article 20.29 in 2017 for religious materials which do not incite violence or hatred. 49 resulted in conviction in first instance, with 48 fines and one 2-day jail term. Judges ordered literature confiscated in 20 cases and destroyed in a further 20 cases.

In a review of available court materials, Forum 18 found 54 prosecutions under Administrative Code Article 20.29 in 2017, for religious materials which do not incite violence or hatred. Of these, 49 resulted in conviction in the first instance, and three in acquittal. Judges halted the other two cases because the time limit on administrative prosecutions had expired.

Administrative Code Article 20.29 punishes "production or mass distribution of extremist materials included in the published Federal List of Extremist Materials, as well as their production or storage for mass distribution".

Punishments in 2017 for religious literature were almost invariably fines, apart from one sentence of administrative arrest. The largest known fine for a private individual was 3,000 Roubles, and for a person in an official capacity – 5,000 Roubles. The largest known fine for a community was 500,000 Roubles (see cases below).

A fine of 5,000 Roubles (620 Norwegian Kroner, 65 Euros or 75 US Dollars) represents about 5 days' average wage for those in formal work.

In a high proportion of prosecutions, bailiffs destroy the "extremist material" when the verdict enters legal force. Judges ordered destruction to take place in 20 cases in 2017 (14 involving Islamic literature and 6 Jehovah's Witness literature). Materials were subject to confiscation in a further 20 instances (see cases below).

(For an analysis of the 2017 cases, see F18News 13 August 2018 http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2403.)

Overall, Administrative Code Article 20.29 prosecutions are overwhelmingly based on the online sharing of materials (887 out of 954 cases found by Forum 18 in 2017), almost always by means of the Russian social network VKontakte. Judging from available court verdicts, the FSB security service and officers of the Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism regularly monitor VKontakte in search of such posts.

Prosecutions for religious materials, however, continue to be dominated by hard copies of books and other materials and comprise the majority of "offline" cases found by Forum 18 (48 out of 67).

Three of the six prosecutions involving online religious material were based on the sharing of the Islamic video "The Wonders of the Koran". This was banned by Nefteyugansk City Court in the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Region (Tyumen Region) on 7 April 2011 and does not appear to incite hatred or violence. Two cases involved the posting of texts originally banned in hard copy to defendants' VKontakte profile pages, and one involved the posting of a link to the banned and blocked international Jehovah's Witness website jw.org.

Forum 18 found that prosecutions under Administrative Code Article 20.29 took place in 25 federal subjects of the Russian Federation in 2017. The regions which saw the highest number of cases are: Republic of Bashkortostan (7 prosecutions from 7 separate investigations), Chelyabinsk (6 prosecutions from 3 investigations), Krasnodar (4 prosecutions from 3 investigations), and Astrakhan (4 prosecutions from 3 investigations).

Defendants appealed against 17 convictions, of which only two were overturned. Prosecutors also challenged two acquittals and succeeded in having one of them overturned, but the appeal judge halted proceedings because the time limit on prosecution had passed by this point. No cases in 2017 are known to have been sent for re-trial.

Even if they are ultimately exonerated, defendants are forced to spend time, energy and money to counter the charges against them, Forum 18 notes. A few defendants pursue appeals through the cassational or supervisory stages (also heard at a regional/republic

court) and up to the Supreme Court, although these efforts are rarely successful.

List of known 2017 Administrative Code Article 20.29 cases

The list of known 2017 prosecutions under Administrative Code Article 20.29 (Production or mass distribution of extremist materials included in the published Federal List of Extremist Materials, as well as their production or storage for mass distribution), based on court records and other information (date of court hearing, name of individual/community, punishment, court, material on which prosecution based, the court decision on the material, appeal):

1) 20 January 2017

Name: Gelendzhik Jehovah's Witness community

Punishment: 100,000 Roubles

Court: Gelendzhik City Court, Krasnodar Region

Material: large quantity of Jehovah's Witness literature, both hard copy and electronic, found during police search of Jehovah's Witness premises in Gelendzhik; community chair and defence lawyers argued that the banned materials had been planted during the search, and that the community only ever used the Bible in its services

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: none

2) 20 January 2017

Name: R. R. Yagudin

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Kusa District Court, Chelyabinsk Region

Material: single copies of Islamic texts "Fortress of a Muslim" by Said al-Qahtani (banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk City Court) and "The Prophet Mohammed – crown of the human race" by Fethullah Gulen (Volume 2, 2004 edition; banned 21 March 2012 by Lenin District Court Orenburg) found by FSB during search of defendant's home

Confiscation/destruction: unknown

Appeal: none

3) 20 January 2017

Name: R. F. Abdrakhmanov

Punishment: 2,000 Roubles

Court: Kusa District Court, Chelyabinsk Region

Material: single copies of Islamic texts "Fortress of a Muslim" by Said al-Qahtani (banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk City Court) and "Islam Today" by Abu Al-Mawdidi (banned Buguruslan City Court, Orenburg, 19 October 2007) found by FSB during search of defendant's home

Confiscation/destruction: unknown

Appeal: none

4) 20 January 2017

Name: M. T. Yumadilov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Kusa District Court, Chelyabinsk Region

Material: single copies of Islamic texts "Fortress of a Muslim" by Said al-Qahtani (banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk City Court) and "The Prophet Mohammed – crown of the human race" by Fethullah Gulen (2 volumes, 2004 edition; banned 21 March 2012 by Lenin District Court Orenburg), found by FSB during search of defendant's home

Confiscation/destruction: unknown

Appeal: none

5) 20 January 2017

Name: E.M. Davlyatshin

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Kusa District Court, Chelyabinsk Region

Material: single copy of Islamic texts "Fortress of a Muslim" by Said al-Qahtani (banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk City Court) found by FSB during search of defendant's home

Confiscation/destruction: unknown

Appeal: none

6) 24 January 2017

Name: Yury Naydich, chair of Dzerzhinsk Jehovah's Witness community

Punishment: 4,000 Roubles

Court: Dzerzhinsk City Court, Nizhny Novgorod Region

Material: Jehovah's Witness texts "What can people hope for?" (2013 edition, banned 5 August 2014 by Kurgan Regional Court) and "How did life come about?" (2014 edition, banned 17 August 2016 by Serov District Court, Sverdlovsk Region) found in disabled toilets at Jehovah's Witnesses' premises during search by prosecutor's office officials – search "was carried out on the basis of a report from a citizen"; defendant insisted that the books did not belong to the community, which only used the Bible, and must have been planted

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: unsuccessful – 6 March 2017, Nizhny Novgorod Regional Court

7) 26 January 2017

Name: Kislovodsk Jehovah's Witness community

Punishment: 500,000 Roubles

Court: Kislovodsk City Court, Stavropol Region

Materials: 11 copies of Jehovah's Witness texts "What does the Bible really teach?", found during police search of community premises in connection with the theft of computer equipment from an office building – police had "operational information" that community chair A.G. Bagdasaryan had been involved in the crime; Bagdasaryan's home also searched

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: unsuccessful – 3 May 2017, Stavropol Regional Court

8) 27 January 2017

Name: Shamil Neverov, imam

Punishment: 2,000 Roubles

Court: Spassk District Court, Penza Region

Material: single copy of Islamic text "Tasavvuf" by Osman Nuri Topbas (banned 21 March 2012 by Lenin District Court, Orenburg) found in library at mosque; unclear which state agency carried out search

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

9) 27 January 2017

Name: M. N. Malova

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Gelendzhik City Court, Krasnodar Region

Material: large quantity of Jehovah's Witness literature, both hard copy and electronic, found during police search of defendant's home

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: unsuccessful – 5 April 2017, Krasnodar Regional Court

10) 31 January 2017

Name: Andrei Yeliseyev, Jehovah's Witness community chair

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Polyarny District Court, Murmansk Region

Material: unknown quantity of unspecified banned Jehovah's Witness literature seized during official search of Jehovah's Witness premises in Snezhnogorsk; community members insisted the banned texts had been planted

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: successful (reasons unknown) – 14 April 2017, Murmansk Regional Court

11) 31 January 2017

Name: Tula Jehovah's Witness community

Punishment: 120,000 Roubles

Court: Proletarian District Court, Tula

Material: same case as Labadze (below) – Jehovah's Witness literature including "What does the Bible really teach?" picked up by a person attending a service, at which people were allegedly encouraged to help themselves to books – the person later realised the texts were on the Federal List of Extremist Materials and reported this to the police, who inspected the building and found more literature; community chair claimed the banned books had been planted

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: unsuccessful – 4 April 2017, Tula Regional Court

12) 6 February 2017

Name: Gurami Labadze

Punishment: 3,000 Roubles

Court: Proletarian District Court, Tula

Material: same case as Tula Jehovah's Witness community (above) – Jehovah's Witness literature including "What does the Bible really teach?" picked up by a person attending a service, at which people were allegedly encouraged to help themselves to books – the person later realised the texts were on the Federal List of Extremist Materials and reported this to the police, who inspected the building and found more literature; community chair claimed the banned books had been planted

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: unsuccessful – 4 April 2017, Tula Regional Court

13) 10 February 2017

Name: Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky Jehovah's Witness community

Punishment: 200,000 Roubles

Court: Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky City Court, Kamchatka Region

Material: three CDs containing electronic copies of Jehovah's Witness texts "What does the Bible really teach?" (banned 11 September 2009 by Rostov Regional Court) found during seven-hour raid on a Jehovah's Witness service; community members claim the discs were planted

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: unsuccessful – 22 March 2017, Kamchatka Regional Court

14) 15 February 2017

Name: S.S. Abdurakhmanov, imam

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Ilek District Court, Orenburg Region

Material: two unidentified Islamic texts, at least one of which is from the Risale-i Nur collection by Said Nursi (banned 21 May 2007 by Koptev District Court, Moscow) found on a table beside the entrance of a mosque during police inspection; defendant pointed out that all the mosque's books were gifts from visitors or had been brought from the community's old mosque; the banned books may have been there since before he took office, and he did not know they had been ruled extremist

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: none

15) 16 February 2017

Name: Yu. O. Nematov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Ivanovo District Court, Ivanovo Region

Material: Islamic text "Fortress of a Muslim" (edition unclear, but banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk District Court, Primorye) found during inspection of Muslim prayer room by FSB and anti-extremism police; defendant – unofficial imam of the prayer room – claimed he did not know the book had been ruled extremist

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

16) 22 February 2017

Name: S.V. Sysoyev, rehab centre director

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Volzhsky District Court, Samara

Material: Jehovah's Witness text "Worship the only true God" (banned 11 September 2009 by Rostov Regional Court) found on a table in a hallway during police search of a rehabilitation centre, in which officers conducted themselves "roughly and rudely", according to a staff member; search derived from a theft investigation; Sysoyev charged as director of the centre, but the centre is not a registered organisation and police presented no evidence of his position – therefore, judge decides he cannot be held legally responsible; Sysoyev is also an Evangelical Christian, not a Jehovah's Witness

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: by prosecution, unsuccessful – 11 May 2017, Samara Regional Court

17) 9 March 2017

Name: Smolensk Jehovah's Witness community

Punishment: 100,000 Roubles

Court: Lenin District Court, Smolensk

Material: large quantity of Jehovah's Witness literature (both hard copy and electronic) seized in search of community members' home – the occupants allegedly handed it out to fellow residents and visitors

Confiscation/destruction: destruction (and deletion of digital material – but laptops and memory sticks to be returned)

Appeal: unsuccessful – 25 April 2017, Smolensk Regional Court; supervisory appeal unsuccessful – 5 June 2017

18) 20 March 2017

Name: R.I. Urusov

Punishment: 1500 Roubles

Court: Prikubansky District Court, Republic of Karachai-Cherkessiya

Material: Islamic text "Fortress of a Muslim" by Said al-Qahtani (2004 edition; banned 6 April 2015 by Kurgan City Court) found by anti-extremism police during search of defendant's home; defendant admitted sharing the book with acquaintances, knowing that it was on the Federal List of Extremist Materials

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: none

19) 23 March 2017

Name: Ayrat Nasyrov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Ketovo District Court, Kurgan Region

Material: 60 copies of Islamic texts including "Muhammad: may Allah bless and welcome him" by Safi al-Rahman al-Mubarakfuri (2008 edition, Ummah; banned by Primorsky District Court, St Petersburg, 19 April 2011) and "Three Foundations" by Mohammed Soleh (banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk District Court, Primorye) found inside an unfinished wall in the loft of a prison mosque during an inspection by prison staff; according to the verdict, "during the inspection it was established that this literature belonged to [the defendant]", a prisoner in the labour camp; defendant explained that these were books which belonged to nobody in particular, which had not been inspected when prisoners' own books were checked in 2015 (as his were) – he had left them in the mosque, not knowing they had been ruled extremist

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

20) 27 March 2017

Name: L. V. Charskaya

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Central District Court, Sochi

Material: defendant accused of "mass distribution" of Jehovah's Witness text "What does the Bible really teach?" for giving a copy to an acquaintance; FSB raid on Jehovah's Witness premises also found banned literature; judge concludes that the defendant's actions were of a "one-off nature" and therefore did not constitute an offence

Confiscation/destruction: unknown

Appeal: by prosecution, partially successful, but case closed as time had run out – 1 June 2017, Krasnodar Regional Court

21) 6 April 2017

Name: A. A. Elderov

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Yakutsk City Court, Republic of Sakha-Yakutiya

Material: Islamic text "Fortress of a Muslim" by Said al-Qahtani (2007 edition, Ummah; banned 21 March 2012 by Lenin District Court, Orenburg) found in unspecified circumstances – defendant is acquitted on the basis of this edition's removal from the Federal List of Extremist Materials

Confiscation/destruction: neither – returned to defendant

Appeal: none

22) 10 April 2017

Name: Ruslan Dzhumayev

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Neverkino District Court, Penza Region

Materials: single copy of Islamic text "Fortress of a Muslim" by Said al-Qahtani (banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk City Court) seized by FSB officers when they arrested the defendant photocopying it at the village council building; defendant explained he had bought the book at a mosque bookshop in Volsk in Saratov Region in 2009 (ie. before it was banned) and kept it and read it to friends, despite knowing it was on the Federal List of Extremist Materials

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

23) 12 April 2017

Name: Anatoly Lyashenko, chair of Astrakhan Jehovah's Witness community

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Kirov District Court, Astrakhan

Material: Jehovah's Witness literature – same case as Astrakhan Jehovah's Witness community (below)

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: supervisory appeal unsuccessful – 22 August 2017, Astrakhan Regional Court

24) 12 April 2017

Name: Astrakhan Jehovah's Witness community

Punishment: 100,000 Roubles

Court: Kirov District Court, Astrakhan

Material: same case as Lyashenko (above) – Jehovah's Witness literature "How to develop a close relationship with God", "How to achieve happiness in life", and "What you need to know about God and his meaning" (quantities not specified) found during search of community's premises by anti-extremism police

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: supervisory appeal unsuccessful – 18 August 2017, Astrakhan Regional Court

25) 12 April 2017

Name: Central Jehovah's Witness community, Nizhny Novgorod

Punishment: 50,000 Roubles

Court: Avtozavodsky District Court, Nizhny Novgorod

Material: single copy of Jehovah's Witness text "How to achieve happiness in life?" (banned 5 August 2014 by Kurgan Regional Court) – details unknown

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: unsuccessful – 6 July 2017, Nizhny Novgorod Regional Court

26) 20 April 2017

Name: Grigory Dzhumabayev

Punishment: 1500 Roubles

Court: Kaluga District Court, Kaluga Region

Material: defendant observed by anti-extremism police leaving several items of Jehovah's Witness literature, including "Jehovah's Witnesses: Who are they? What do they believe?" (2,000 edition; banned 11 September 2009 by Rostov Regional Court), in a mini-library on the street

Confiscation/destruction: unknown

Appeal: none

27) 21 April 2017

Name: K. Yu. Osokin

Punishment: 2,000 Roubles

Court: Shpakovsky District Court, Stavropol District

Material: 20 copies of Jehovah's Witness text "What does the Bible really teach?" and one copy of "The greatest person who ever lived" found during FSB and anti-extremism police search of defendant's home; defendant denied possessing extremist literature and claimed it had been planted by the officers carrying out the search

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: none

28) 4 May 2017

Name: B. B. Rakhmatullin

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Krasnoarmeysk District Court, Chelyabinsk Region

Material: single copy of Islamic text "Fortress of a Muslim" by Said al-Qahtani (edition unclear; banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk City Court, Primorye) found during police search of a Muslim prayer room; unclear how ownership was attributed to defendant – defendant admitted the book was his but denied knowing it had been ruled extremist

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: none

29) 5 May 2017

Name: A.A. Akhmadkulov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Nizhnevartovsk City Court, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District

Material: Islamic texts "Foundations of faith in the light of the Koran and Sunnah", by Salih al-Suheyimi, Abd al-Razzaq al-Badar, and Ibrahim al-Ruheyli (2nd edition, 2006, Ummah; banned 16 February 2015 by Kurgan City Court); "Fortress of a Muslim" by Said al-Qahtani (3rd edition, 2009, Ummah; banned 16 February 2015 by Kurgan City Court) found during police search of a prayer room at Tashkent café in Nizhnevartovsk; defendant explained he had only recently taken over as manager of the café and had not noticed what visitors may have left behind in the prayer room

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: none

30) 22 May 2017

Name: U. N. Aminov

Punishment: 2 days' arrest

Court: Artyomovsky City Court, Sverdlovsk Region

Material: defendant gave Islamic text "Fortress of a Muslim" (edition unclear, but banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk District Court, Primorye) to two fellow Tajik citizens at the bakery where they all work, using the book "for the mass dissemination of radical Islamic ideas among Muslims", according to the FSB, who conducted a search of the bakery; judge imposed administrative arrest because of defendant's financial position

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: none

31) 23 May 2017

Name: A.A. Kozlov

Punishment: none – statute of limitations expired

Court: Slobodskoy District Court, Kirov Region

Material: defendant posted link to international Jehovah's Witness website jw.org on his VKontakte profile page

Confiscation/destruction: n/a

Appeal: none

32) 31 May 2017

Name: Sergei Baldanov

Punishment: 3,000 Roubles

Court: Khostinsky District Court, Sochi

Material: single copy of Falun Gong text "Falun Dafa in the World" (banned 27 October 2011 by Pervomaysky District Court, Krasnodar) seized by FSB at Falun Gong event in Frunze Park, Sochi; defendant organised the event, and admitted having given the book to several people in turn so that they could study and understand Falun Gong practice

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: unsuccessful – 9 August 2017, Krasnodar Regional Court

33) 5 June 2017

Name: Sergei Tuguzhekov

Punishment: 2,000 Roubles

Court: Abakan City Court, Republic of Khakasiya

Material: Falun Gong text "Chzhuan Falun" (banned 27 October 2011 by Pervomaysky District Court, Krasnodar) – defendant voluntarily gave up a copy of the text, which he used for teaching at a Falun Gong school, to police after he had discovered it had been ruled extremist

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: unsuccessful – 5 July 2017, Supreme Court of the Republic of Khakasiya

34) 9 June 2017

Name: Kh. Kh. Galimova

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Belokataysky Interdistrict Court, Republic of Bashkortostan

Material: single copy of Islamic text "Fortress of a Muslim" by Said al-Qahtani (unspecified edition; appears to be one banned on 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk District Court, Primorye) found by FSB on a bookshelf in the living room of defendant's home, ie. "in a visible place, with which a third party may become acquainted"; defendant claimed she did not know the book had been ruled extremist, that it was for her personal use, and that no other person came into her home

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

35) 19 June 2017

Name: G. T. Gadzhimagomedov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Soviet District Court, Makhachkala

Material: Islamic texts "A Short Introduction to the Book 'The Correct Way of Understanding Monotheism' by Said al-Qahtani (banned 16 May 2015 by Kotelnich District Court, Kirov Region), "Three Foundations" by Mohammed Soleh (banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk District Court, Primorye), "Truths of the Eternity of the Soul" (2,000 edition; banned 21 May 2007 by Koptev District Court, Moscow) from the Risale-I Nur collection by Said Nursi, and "A Guide for Youth" (edition unspecified), also from the Risale-I Nur collection by Said Nursi – found by anti-extremism police at a Muslim shop inside the Atrium shopping centre in Makhachkala; shopkeeper denied knowing the books had been ruled extremist; police seized a total of 368 books from the shop – judge ordered all others to be returned

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: none

36) 21 June 2017

Name: R. Kh. Rakhmangulov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Salavatsky Interdistrict Court, Republic of Bashkortostan

Material: single copy of Islamic text "Fortress of a Muslim" (edition unspecified) found at defendant's home by FSB; defendant admitted owning the book, but insisted that it as for his own personal use and he had never given it to anybody else

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: successful (on grounds that owning one copy does not constitute "mass distribution" – book still destroyed) – 16 August 2017, Supreme Court of the Republic of Bashkortostan

37) 13 July 2017

Name: I.O. Dzhumayev

Punishment: 2,000 Roubles

Court: Yegoryevsk City Court, Moscow Region

Material: Islamic text "Fortress of a Muslim" (3rd edition, 2011, Umma – banned 22 August 2016 by Soviet District Court, Ulan-Ude) found in defendant's room at an aviation technical college during inspection by FSB and Moscow Air and Water Transport Prosecutor's Office; defendant is a Tajik citizen – did not know the book had been ruled extremist and explained it had been given to him as a gift

Confiscation/destruction: unknown

Appeal: none

38) 4 August 2017

Name: Artur Mukhutdinov, chair of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Sverdlovsk Region (Urals Mukhtasibat)

Punishment: 2,000 Roubles

Court: Railway District Court, Yekaterinburg

Material: same case as below – Islamic texts including "Faith and Man" (2,000 edition) from Risale-i Nur collection by Said Nursi (banned 21 May 2007 by Koptev District Court, Moscow) found in a bookcase in a prayer room; search carried out by FSB "in order to verify incoming operational information about the storage of extremist literature"; organisation chair argued that the books did not belong to it – the prayer room had been provided to the organisation for free use, was not owned by it, and was accessible to anybody; defence pointed out that the imam performs his own systematic inspections to ensure no extremist literature is present

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: unsuccessful – 17 October 2017, Sverdlovsk Regional Court; supervisory appeal unsuccessful – 11 December 2017, Sverdlovsk Regional Court

39) 4 August 2017

Name: Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Sverdlovsk Region (Urals Mukhtasibat)

Punishment: 50,000 Roubles

Court: Railway District Court, Yekaterinburg

Material: same case as above – Islamic texts including "Faith and Man" (2,000 edition) from Risale-i Nur collection by Said Nursi (banned 21 May 2007 by Koptev District Court, Moscow) found in a bookcase in a prayer room; search carried out by FSB "in order to verify incoming operational information about the storage of extremist literature"; organisation chair argued that the books did not belong to it – the prayer room had been provided to the organisation for free use, was not owned by it, and was accessible to anybody; defence pointed out that the imam performs his own systematic inspections to ensure no extremist literature is present

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: unsuccessful – 17 October 2017, Sverdlovsk Regional Court; supervisory appeal unsuccessful – 14 December 2017, Sverdlovsk Regional Court

40) 24 August 2017

Name: M. Kh. Fakhрутдинov

Punishment: none – statute of limitations expired

Court: Kunashak District Court, Chelyabinsk

Material: Islamic literature including "Fortress of a Muslim" (unspecified edition, apparently banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk District Court, Primorye) and "The Life of the Prophet, May Allah Bless and Welcome Him" by Al-Mubarakfuri Safi ar-Rahman (2008 Ummah edition, banned 21 March 2012 by Lenin District Court, Orenburg) found in defendant's home during search by prosecutor's office staff; defendant argued that he had not known the books had been ruled extremist, the books had been freely available in a shop, and that because of his old age, he did not use computers and so could not look at the Federal List of Extremist Materials; defendant's daughter argued that the presence of the books on her father's bookshelf did not prove intent to distribute; judge closed case as more than two months had passed since the search

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

41) 24 August 2017

Name: I.Z. Usmanov, community director

Punishment: 2,000 Roubles

Court: Kumertau City Court, Republic of Bashkortostan

Material: three copies of Islamic text "Muhammad is the Greatest of All, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" (publication year unknown, Office for the Promotion, Advocacy, and Education of Ethnic Minorities in Rabwah District) by Abdurrahman bin Abdulkarim Al-Sheha (banned 4 April 2016 by Kalinin District Court, Tyumen) found "openly accessible" on a bookshelf in the women's prayer room of a mosque during prosecutor's office inspection; defendant is the director of the local Muslim religious organisation

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: none

42) 31 August 2017

Name: Kasim Bizyayev, imam

Punishment: 3,000 Roubles

Court: Neverkino District Court, Penza Region

Material: single copy of Islamic text "The Values of Ramadan" by Muhammad Zakariya Kandahlawi (banned 29 December 2014 by Norilsk City Court, Krasnoyarsk Region) found during prosecutor's office inspection of the Yalkin Uram mosque in Oktyabrskoye village; officials found the book "freely accessible" on shelves in the prayer room, "among religious literature intended for distribution and study by parishioners"; defendant claimed he did not know how the book entered the mosque – it may have been brought by visitors; defendant pointed out that parishioners were not allowed to take books from the mosque and could only study them on the premises

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: unsuccessful – 26 October 2017, Penza Regional Court

43) 8 September 2017

Name: Yu. A. Gafarova

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Sibay City Court, Republic of Bashkortostan

Material: Islamic video "Wonders of the Koran" (banned 7 April 2011 by Nefteyugansk City Court, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region) uploaded to defendant's VKontakte profile page; defendant denied knowing the film had been ruled extremist and had now deleted it

Confiscation/destruction: n/a

Appeal: none

44) 22 September 2017

Name: K.E. Kovalchuk

Punishment: 2,000 Roubles

Court: Privolzhsky District Court, Astrakhan Region

Material: text of Islamic publications "The Way to the Koran" (2003, Abilov, Zeynalov, and Sons) by Elmir Kuliyeu (banned 12 July 2012 by Kuybyshev District Court, Omsk) and "The Life of the Prophet, May Allah Bless and Welcome Him" by Al-Mubarakfuri Safi ar-Rahman (2008 Ummah edition, banned 21 March 2012 by Lenin District Court, Orenburg) uploaded to defendant's VKontakte profile page

Confiscation/destruction: n/a

Appeal: none

45) 4 October 2017

Name: Elvira Zagidullina

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Karmaskaly Inter-district Court, Republic of Bashkortostan

Material: two Jehovah's Witness books (titles redacted – appear to have been banned by Rostov Regional Court on 11 September 2009) found in Sakhayevo village library during prosecutor's office inspection; librarian explained they had been donated to the library

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

46) 19 October 2017

Name: A.G. Tokmakov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Verkhnekamsk District Court, Kirov Region

Material: Islamic text "General Introduction to Islam" by Sheikh Ali al-Tantawi (banned 24 November 2010 by Maykop City Court, Republic of Adygeya) found by guards on labour camp prisoner – defendant accused of giving it to fellow inmates in the exercise yard

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

47) 19 October 2017

Name: D.M. Akmedov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Lenin District Court, Astrakhan

Material: text of Islamic publication "The Life of the Prophet, May Allah Bless and Welcome Him" by Al-Mubarakfuri Safi ar-Rahman (banned 19 April 2011 by Primorsky District Court, St Petersburg) uploaded to defendant's VKontakte profile page; defendant denied knowing the book had been ruled extremist

Confiscation/destruction: n/a

Appeal: none

48) 24 October 2017

Name: M.M. Kabirov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Beloretsk City Court, Republic of Bashkortostan

Material: Islamic video "Wonders of the Koran" (banned 7 April 2011 by Nefteyugansk City Court Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region) uploaded onto defendant's VKontakte profile page; defendant admitted the upload, but denied knowing the video had been ruled extremist, and claimed he deleted the video a day later

Confiscation/destruction: n/a

Appeal: none

49) 24 October 2017

Name: M.M. Kartoyeva

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Magas District Court, Republic of Ingushetiya

Material: two copies of Islamic text "Fortress of a Muslim" (edition unspecified – one of two banned on 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk District Court, Primorye) found by anti-extremism police on a market stall in Nazran

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

50) 22 November 2017

Name: A.I. Akhmadeyev

Punishment: 2,000 Roubles

Court: Uchaly District Court, Republic of Bashkortostan

Material: Islamic video "Wonders of the Koran" (banned 7 April 2011 by Nefteyugansk City Court, Khaty-Mani Autonomous District) uploaded onto defendant's VKontakte profile page

Confiscation/destruction: n/a

Appeal: none

51) 13 December 2017

Name: Andrei Lyulyukin, hostel owner

Punishment: 2,000 Roubles

Court: Kanavinsky District Court, Nizhny Novgorod

Material: Jehovah's Witness text "What does the Bible really teach?" found by police on bookshelf in a hostel, where guests could leave and take books as they wished; hostel director explained he had no knowledge of what books were in the library or who had left them, and that the collection had now been removed entirely

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

52) 20 December 2017

Name: R.D. Zaylyapov – mosque imam

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Surgut City Court, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District

Material: anti-extremism police inspection of mosque premises found banned Islamic literature in a classroom and the mosque shop; titles redacted, but appear to include Elmir Kuliyeu's "The Way to the Koran" (2003, Abilov, Zeynalov, and Sons; banned 12 July 2012 by Kuybyshev District Court, Omsk);

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

53) 22 December 2017

Name: Khabibullo Gulov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Verkhnekamsk District Court, Kirov Region

Material: single copy of Islamic text "Forty Hadiths" (edition unspecified, banned 28 May 2012 by Sol-Iletsk District Court, Orenburg Region) found in locker belonging to prisoner in labour camp, during inspection by prosecutor's office; prisoner accused of giving the book to two fellow inmates in the prison library

Confiscation/destruction: destruction

Appeal: none

54) 27 December 2017

Name: A.A. Magomedov

Punishment: 1,000 Roubles

Court: Kizilyurt District Court, Republic of Dagestan

Material: imam of Red Mosque (Chontaul village); inter-agency (prosecutor's office, FSB, police) inspection of mosque found 15 copies of banned Islamic literature, including "Fortress of a Muslim" (3rd edition, Ezhayev; banned 22 August 2016 by Soviet District Court, Ulan-Ude), "Fortress of a Muslim" (2006 edition, Ezhayev; banned 16 February 2015 by Kurgan City Court), "Fortress of a Muslim" (edition unspecified, banned 31 July 2014 by Ussuriysk District Court, Primorye), and "Personality of a Muslim" (4th edition, banned 6 August 2007 by Buguruslan City Court, Orenburg Region); according to imam, the books had been brought to the mosque by parishioners and distributed by them

Confiscation/destruction: confiscation

Appeal: none

(END)

For more background see Forum 18's surveys of the general state of freedom of religion and belief in Russia at http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=2246, and of the dramatic decline in this freedom related to Russia's Extremism Law at http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=2215.

A personal commentary by Alexander Verkhovsky, Director of the SOVA Center for Information and Analysis <http://www.sova-center.ru>, about the systemic problems of Russian anti-extremism legislation, is at F18News 19 July 2010 http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=1468.

A personal commentary by Irina Budkina, Editor of the <http://www.samstar.ucoz.ru> Old Believer website, about continuing denial of equality to Russia's religious minorities, is at F18News 26 May 2005 http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=570.

More reports on freedom of thought, conscience and belief in Russia can be found at <http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?query=&religion=all&country=10>.

A compilation of Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) freedom of religion or belief commitments can be found at http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=1351.

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If you need to contact F18News, please email us at:
f18news @ editor.forum18.org

Forum 18
Postboks 6603
Rodeløkka
N-0502 Oslo
NORWAY