

29 October 2021

## CRIMEA: Four already jailed, 12 more to follow?

By Felix Corley, Forum 18 (<https://www.forum18.org>)

*A Sevastopol court jailed 49-year-old Jehovah's Witness Igor Schmidt for six years on "extremism"-related charges to be followed by a six-year ban on specific activities although the prosecution presented no victims of any wrongdoing in court. Schmidt is the fourth Crimean Jehovah's Witness handed a long jail term. Another is on trial in Kerch and at least 11 more face criminal cases. The widow of a man shot dead by Russian forces in disputed circumstances in May has lost her appeal against the denial of release of the body for an Islamic burial.*

On 22 October, a judge in the city of Sevastopol jailed 49-year-old Jehovah's Witness Igor Schmidt for six years on "extremism"-related charges to be followed by a six-year ban on specific activities. The prosecution presented no one in court who they said had been a victim of Schmidt's exercise of his freedom of religion and belief. If any appeal fails, he is likely to be sent to a labour camp in Russia to serve his sentence.

Prisoner of conscience Schmidt is one of 16 Jehovah's Witnesses in Crimea who have had criminal cases opened against them on "extremism"-related charges since Russia illegally annexed the peninsula in 2014. He is one of four serving long jail terms, three of them already illegally transferred to Russian jails. (A list of the four convicted and jailed prisoners of conscience is at the foot of this article.)

Another Jehovah's Witness is on trial in Kerch. A further 11 are under criminal investigation: five in Yalta, two in Armyansk and four in Sevastopol (see below).

The Russian Investigative Committee announced in August that in addition to the five already facing a criminal case in Yalta, further individuals are being sought or identified (see below).

Meanwhile, nearly six months after Russian forces shot dead Crimean Tatar Muslim Nabi Rakhimov in disputed circumstances on 11 May, all attempts to get his body released for an Islamic burial have failed. Crimea's Supreme Court rejected his widow's appeal against the denial. Investigators claim that Rakhimov had been killed "in the course of preventing a terrorist act". Against international law, Russian law denies the return of bodies of those killed in "terrorist" operations. In 2007, Russian Constitutional Court Judge Anatoly Kononov described this provision as "absolutely immoral, reflecting the most uncivilised, barbaric and base views of previous generations" (see below).

Prisoner of conscience under restrictions after completing jail sentence

In December 2020, Muslim Renat Suleimanov was freed from labour camp after completing his four-year sentence. He was punished on "extremism"-related charges for meeting with other Muslims in mosques to discuss their faith, and accused of alleged membership of the Tabligh Jamaat Muslim missionary movement. After more than 15 months in pre-trial detention following his October 2017 arrest by the Russian FSB security service, the Crimean Supreme Court convicted him in January 2019 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2444](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2444)). Three other Muslims on trial with him for meeting with others in mosques to discuss their faith were given two and a half year suspended sentences, which they have now completed.

Suleimanov remains under post-prison restrictions until 24 December 2021 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2616](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2616)). He also remains on the Russian Federal Financial Monitoring Service (Rosfinmonitoring) "List of Terrorists and Extremists" ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2687](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2687)). This blocks their bank accounts, and causes problems in finding formal employment, obtaining insurance, buying and selling property, and a range of other financial activities.

On 12 March 2021, at the request of the police and the Prosecutor's Office, Simferopol District Court imposed administrative supervision lasting eight years from 24 December 2021, when Suleimanov's post-prison restrictions are due to end, according to the court website. During this eight-year period, he must report to the police twice a month, will not be allowed to leave the Crimean peninsula without permission, and will have to be at home each night from midnight until 4 am. Suleimanov appealed against this, but his appeals were rejected at Crimea's Supreme Court on 4 May, and at the 4th Cassational Court in the Russian city of Krasnodar on 7 October, according to the court websites.

## Russia defying international law

Russia imposed its anti-"extremism" legislation in Crimea following its March 2014 illegal annexation of the peninsula from Ukraine (<https://www.nhc.no/en/qa-breaches-of-international-law-and-human-rights-issues-2/>). This included imposing Russia's 2017 ban as "extremist" of all Jehovah's Witness communities ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2297](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2297)). The 2009 ban as "extremist" of the Muslim missionary movement Tabligh Jamaat ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=1724](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1724)) was also imposed on Crimea.

During monitoring of the internet, the Crimean Human Rights Group found that 13 of 14 providers in 12 towns across Crimea it tested had blocked the Jehovah's Witness international website, the group noted on 4 October 2021.

On 11 March 2021, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in relation to Russian restrictions on freedom of religion and belief condemned "the unlawful application of Russian Federation legislation by the occupation authorities of the Russian Federation in the occupied territory [Crimea] (<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/31stReportUkraine-en.pdf>)." Among its recommendations, OHCHR called on Russia to:

"Lift discriminatory regulatory barriers prohibiting or limiting the activities of religious groups in Crimea, including Jehovah's Witnesses and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine";

and to "Refrain from deporting detainees to serve prison sentences in the Russian Federation and return to Crimea those who were previously deported."

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea is not recognised by Ukraine or internationally.

Sevastopol: Six-year jail term, one year of restricted freedom, 6-year ban on activity

On 22 October, Judge Lyudmila Tumaikina of Sevastopol's Gagarin District Court found Jehovah's Witness Igor Yakovlevich Schmidt (born 18 June 1972) guilty under Russian Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2215](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2215)) ("Organisation of the activity of a social or religious association or other organisation in relation to which a court has adopted a decision legally in force on liquidation or ban on the activity in connection with the carrying out of extremist activity"), according to court records.

Judge Tumaikina jailed him for six years in a general regime labour camp. Prosecutor Valery Yazev had demanded a jail term of seven years. Forum 18 was unable to find out why Prosecutor Yazev demanded such a long prison term. Sevastopol Prosecutor's Office told Forum 18 on 28 October that he was on leave.

If any appeal fails, Schmidt is likely to be sent to a labour camp in Russia to serve his sentence.

Judge Tumaikina also specified further restrictions once Schmidt completes his jail term. He will be under one year's restricted freedom, and under a concurrent six-year ban on educational activity, speaking publicly and publishing in the media and on the internet, Jehovah's Witnesses told Forum 18 on 29 October.

Two months before Schmidt's release from prison, the prison authorities will be obliged to go to court to request administrative supervision.

Prisoner of conscience Schmidt was arrested during raids on nine homes of Jehovah's Witnesses in the port city of Sevastopol on 1 October 2020 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2617](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2617)). Courts then ordered Yevgeny Zhukov – the former head of the registered community – and three others to be held in pre-trial detention.

"During the trial, prosecutors presented not a single victim to the court," Jehovah's Witnesses noted. Secret recordings of Jehovah's Witnesses were played, although often they were barely audible.

In his final address, Schmidt insisted he was innocent of any wrongdoing. "If Jehovah's Witnesses were extremists, then they would have acted as extremists," he told the court. "You never hear of Jehovah's Witnesses using force or brutality against anyone, or that Jehovah's Witnesses call for this."

Officials arrested Schmidt in the courtroom once the verdict had been read out and took him away to begin serving his sentence, Crimean Solidarity noted the same day.

Senior Investigator for especially serious cases Captain Sergei Bosiyev of the Russian FSB security service's Crimea and Sevastopol Investigation Department launched the criminal case against Schmidt on 24 September 2020

([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2617](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2617)). The following month, officers raided at least nine homes in Sevastopol.

On 2 October 2020, Sevastopol's Lenin District Court ordered that Schmidt be held in Investigation Prison ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2617](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2617)) while the case against him was being prepared. On 23 March 2021, after nearly six months in pre-trial detention, Schmidt was transferred to house arrest. A week later prosecutors handed his criminal case to court for trial.

Four others detained during the October 2020 raids and held in pre-trial detention are facing a separate criminal case in Sevastopol (see below).

Two serving jail terms until 2026

Two Crimean Jehovah's Witnesses are serving long jail terms which they are due to complete in 2026. Both are serving their sentences at the same labour camp in Russia's Rostov Region.

Sergei Viktorovich Filatov (born 6 June 1972), sentenced to six years' imprisonment with, post-prison, a five-year ban on educational activity, speaking publicly and publishing in the media and on the internet ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2552](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2552)) in March 2020 for meeting with family and friends to discuss religious themes, is due to complete his prison term on 23 January 2026.

Artyom Vyacheslavovich Gerasimov (born 13 January 1985), sentenced to six years' imprisonment in June 2020 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2577](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2577)) for meeting with others to discuss the Bible, is due to complete his prison term on 3 June 2026.

Filatov and Gerasimov are on the Russian Rosfinmonitoring "List of Terrorists and Extremists" ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2687](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2687)).

Filatov and Gerasimov's prison address is:

347803 Rostovskaya oblast

g. Kamensk-Shakhtinsky

ul. Morskaya 94

FKU Ispravitelnaya koloniya No. 12 UFSIN Rossii po Rostovskoy oblasti

Sevastopol: Appeal rejected, prisoner transferred to Russian jail

On 29 March, a Sevastopol court handed down the longest jail term yet in Crimea on "extremism"-related charges to punish an individual for exercising freedom of religion or belief. Gagarin District Court jailed Jehovah's Witness Viktor Vladimirovich Stashevsky (born 11 July 1966) for six and a half years in an ordinary regime labour camp, which he is due to complete on 24 July 2027.

Russia's FSB security service claimed that prisoner of conscience Stashevsky "deliberately took active organisational actions with the aim of continuing the unlawful activities of an extremist organisation prohibited by the court".

At a 30 June 2020 hearing, two former members of the registered Jehovah's Witness organisation in Sevastopol testified that after Russia's Supreme Court declared the Jehovah's Witness organisation "extremist" and banned its activity in 2017 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2297](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2297)), the Sevastopol organisation ceased to exist.

They said that neither Stashevsky nor other organisation members conducted any further activity on behalf of the organisation. They pointed out the difference between the organisation's activities – such as handling legal, financial and administrative matters – and individuals' activity of reading the Bible, praying and singing ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2648](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2648)).

The defence complained that they were unable to question the prosecution "witnesses", the secret witness "Vasilisa Ivanova", and D. Korkushko ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2648](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2648)), who had allegedly attended the community before its liquidation in 2017.

Stashevsky was convicted in March 2021 under Russian Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2215](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2215)) ("Organisation of the activity of a social or religious association or other organisation in relation to which a court has adopted a decision legally in force on liquidation or ban on the activity in connection with the carrying out of extremist activity"). He denied the charges.

Stashevsky's prison term is to be followed by a seven-year ban on educational activity, speaking publicly and publishing in the media and on the internet (which would be due to end on 24 July 2034, when he would be 68).

Prisoner of conscience denied Bible, illegally transferred to Russia

Following his conviction, prison officials held Stashevsky in Investigation Prison No. 1 in Simferopol in a cell for 16 prisoners. He was allowed daily walks. A Bible was handed in to the prison for him on 24 April, but it appears prison officials did not hand it over to him, Jehovah's Witnesses noted. He did receive letters from friends.

Stashevsky appealed against his conviction, but on 10 August Judge Vitaly Avkhimov of Sevastopol City Court upheld the sentence, according to court records.

Stashevsky is on the Russian Rosfinmonitoring "List of Terrorists and Extremists" ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2687](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2687)).

On 30 August, prison officials began Stashevsky's transfer to Russia to serve his jail term in a prison in Krasnodar Region in southern European Russia.

Prisoner of conscience Stashevsky's transfer to Russia – like other transfers - was against international law ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2496](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2496)). The 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War covers the rights of civilians in territories occupied by another state (described as "protected persons"). Article 76 includes the provision: "Protected persons accused of offences shall be detained in the occupied country, and if convicted they shall serve their sentences therein." ([https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.33\\_GC-IV-EN.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf))

Prisoner of conscience Stashevsky was held in quarantine. Prison officials then put him in a punishment cell, saying this was because of the serious charges for which he had been convicted rather than because of any violation of prison rules.

Muslim prisoner of conscience Suleimanov was also illegally placed in a punishment cell ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2496](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2496)) on arrival in a Russian labour camp.

Stashevsky's lawyer was able to visit him in labour camp in September. He noted that Stashevsky had not been handed any letters since his arrival but was able to re-read letters he had brought with him from the Investigation Prison in Simferopol and read the Bible, Jehovah's Witnesses noted on 20 September. He remained especially concerned about his sick mother who he had cared for and who had suffered a stroke and a severe fracture shortly before the lawyer's visit.

An official of the prison – who did not give her name - refused to tell Forum 18 on 28 October whether Stashevsky is still in the punishment cell and, if so, explain why. "It is forbidden for us to give such information by telephone."

Stashevsky's prison address is:

352671, Krasnodarsky krai

Apsheronsky raion

g. Khadyzhensk

ul. Griboyedova 42

FKU Ispravitelnaya koloniya No. 9 UFSIN Rossii po Krasnodarskomu krayu

Kerch: Trial resumes in November

The trial of Jehovah's Witness Artyom Alekseyevich Shably (born 11 November 1990) began at Kerch City Court on 24 May. He is facing charges under Russian Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1.1 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2637](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2637)) ("Inclination, recruitment or other involvement of a person in an extremist organisation"). The most recent hearing was on 11 October, with the next hearing under Judge Irina Altanets due on 10 November, according to court records.

Prisoner of conscience Shably was arrested on 26 May 2020 during raids on suspected Jehovah's Witnesses ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2577](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2577)). Shably lives with his wife, their two young children, and his mother. Officers broke the window in the hallway to gain entrance. Shably's four-year-old son cut his foot on the broken glass lying on the floor. Officers put Shably in handcuffs, forcing him to stand with his head against the wall for several hours in light clothing in the cold wind through the door and broken window before taking him away.

He was accused of "attracting others into the activity of an extremist organisation" because he talked to the Investigator about the Bible ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2577](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2577)). While Shably was in detention, officers summoned his wife for interrogation. "The Investigator tried to pressure her, threatening to imprison her husband," Jehovah's Witnesses said. Officers released her later that day.

At the opening of the trial on 24 May 2021, about 20 of Shably's supporters came to the court, but officials did not allow them in, Jehovah's Witnesses said. Officers of the police and traffic police took passport details of the supporters and told them waiting near the court was banned.

During the trial, Shably stated that he and his family are victims of Russia's FSB security service.

Yalta: Five under criminal investigation

Investigators continue to pursue criminal cases against at least 12 other Crimean Jehovah's Witnesses, five of them in the southern Crimean city of Yalta.

On 4 March, Senior Investigator Vladimir Novikov of the Russian Investigative Committee's Department for Investigating Especially Important Cases opened a case against Taras Grigoryevich Kuzio (born 19 June 1978), who lives in Yalta, under Russian Criminal Code Article 282.3, Part 1 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2637](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2637)) ("Financing of extremist activity"). Exactly a week later, officers raided the homes of at least nine Jehovah's Witnesses in Yalta. On 12 March, Simferopol's Kiev District Court rejected the investigator's request to hold Kuzio in pre-trial detention because he has two young children, instead ordering house arrest.

In March 2019, Russian officers raided eight Jehovah's Witness family homes in and around Yalta ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2466](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2466)). Officers seized religious literature, money and other documents, and took several people for interrogation. Both current prisoner of conscience Gerasimov (see above) and Kuzio had to sign a pledge not to leave the area. The criminal case reached court in September 2019.

On 13 February 2020 Kuzio's home was again raided ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2550](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2550)), officers intending to use a grinding machine to break into his home. But he reached the door to let them in before they could force entry, Jehovah's Witnesses told Forum 18. Officers seized electronic devices and personal notes, and the Russian FSB security service refused to explain to Forum 18 why Kuzio's home was raided.

On 11 March 2021 Kuzio's home was again raided after the new case was opened ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2648](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2648)) against him under Russian Criminal Code Article 282.3, Part 1 ("Financing of extremist activity").

Investigator Novikov opened a criminal case on the same charges against another Yalta Jehovah's Witness Pyotr Alekseyevich Zhiltsov (born 19 August 1987) on 29 July 2021. He was detained the same day. He was then placed under house arrest.

Investigator Novikov also opened cases on 29 July against Taras Kuzio's wife Darya Nikolayevna Kuzio (born 13 March 1982), Sergei Aleksandrovich Lyulin (born 24 September 1984), Tadevos Derenekovich Manukyan (born 24 October 1981) and against Zhiltsov under Russian Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2215](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2215)) ("Organisation of the activity of a social or religious association or other organisation in relation to which a court has adopted a decision legally in force on liquidation or ban on the activity in connection with the carrying out of extremist activity").

Investigator Novikov's telephone went unanswered each time Forum 18 called on 29 October.

Yalta: Cases against five combined into one case

On 30 July 2021, Investigator Novikov combined all the cases into one case against all five people: Taras Kuzio, his wife Darya Kuzio, Sergei Lyulin, Tadevos Manukyan, and Pyotr Zhiltsov.

On 10 August, border guards near Belgorod in southern European Russia detained Lyulin as he tried to cross the border into Ukraine. The following day, Investigator Novikov and police officers, all in plain clothes, arrived and placed Lyulin in a minibus for the journey back to Crimea.

"They push the believer into the luggage compartment of the minibus, handcuff his hands to the ceiling handrails on both sides of the cabin, and tape his legs to the seat," Jehovah's Witnesses told Forum 18. During the journey, which lasts 16 hours, officers offered Lyulin food and drink but he refused.

Once in Simferopol, officers took Lyulin to Investigation Prison No. 1 in Simferopol. On 13 August, Simferopol's Kiev District

Court ordered him held in detention until 4 September. His pre-trial detention was later extended. Lyulin was initially held in a cell with 15 others, many of whom smoked. He also contracted coronavirus. He was later transferred to a cell for two.

On 16 August, at the request of Investigator Novikov, Kiev District Court authorised a house search in the town of Yevpatoriya, 160 km (100 miles) from Yalta, where he suspected Jehovah's Witnesses were meeting. One of the residents of the house was ill in bed and officers had to call an ambulance. After a two-hour search, officers took nothing, apologised for the false report and left.

A 17 August Investigative Committee report on the criminal case reported the detention of Lyulin near Belgorod in Russia and his pre-trial detention in Simferopol, though without identifying him by name. While noting that five people were subjects of the case, it added: "Another participant of the group is now wanted, and a range of further individuals who took part in the activity of the banned religious organisation are being established."

Of the Yalta five, Taras Kuzio and Zhiltsov are under house arrest, while Darya Kuzio had to sign a pledge not to leave the area. Manukyan appears not to be under any restrictions.

Lyulin is in Investigation Prison No. 1. His address is:

295006 Respublika Krym

g. Simferopol

bul. Lenina 4

FKU Sledstvennyy izolyator No. 1 UFSIN Rossii po Respublike Krym i g. Sevastopolyu

Armyansk: Two under criminal investigation

On 2 August, Russian FSB Senior Investigator Vitaly Vlasov launched criminal cases against two men in the northern Crimean town of Armyansk, Aleksandr Fyodorovich Dubovenko (born 31 March 1973) and Aleksandr Viktorovich Litvinyuk (born 3 November 1960) under Russian Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2215](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2215)) ("Organisation of the activity of a social or religious association or other organisation in relation to which a court has adopted a decision legally in force on liquidation or ban on the activity in connection with the carrying out of extremist activity"). The Investigator accused them of "using the Zoom video-conference facility" to "attract new members to the [banned] organisation".

On 5 August, officers arrived in a minibus and cars without number plates and searched eight homes in Armyansk, Jehovah's Witnesses noted. The searches at the homes of Dubovenko (who was not present) and Litvinyuk lasted nine hours and officers seized computers, personal notes and documents about the homes.

Officers took Litvinyuk to Simferopol, 140 km (85 miles) away. The following day, 6 August, Kiev District Court placed him under house arrest.

On 9 August, officers took Dubovenko to the Russian FSB security service headquarters in Simferopol. In his absence, and in the presence only of his wife Aleksandra, officials conducted a second house search. They seized further electronic equipment. Kiev District Court similarly placed Dubovenko under house arrest.

On 10 August the Investigator had Dubovenko and Litvinyuk added to the Russian Rosfinmonitoring "List of Terrorists and Extremists" ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2687](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2687)).

Forum 18 reached FSB Senior Investigator Vlasov on 29 October, but as soon as it began asking about the cases of Dubovenko and Litvinyuk he put the phone down. Subsequent calls went unanswered.

Sevastopol: Four under criminal investigation

Four further Jehovah's Witnesses remain under criminal investigation in Sevastopol: Vladimir Fedorovich Sakada (born 4 October 1970), Vladimir Ivanovich Maladyka (born 8 July 1963), Yevgeny Sergeyevich Zhukov (born 19 November 1969) and Aleksandr Viktorovich Kostenko (born 15 July 1991).

The Russian FSB security service's Investigation Department is investigating the four under Russian Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2215](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2215)) ("Organisation of the activity of a social or religious association or other organisation in relation to which a court has adopted a decision legally in force on liquidation or ban on the activity in connection with the carrying out of extremist activity").

The four were detained after officers raided at least nine homes in Sevastopol

([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2617](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2617)) on 1 October 2020. Three of the four – Sakada, Maladyka and Zhukov - were ordered held in pre-trial detention, together with Igor Schmidt (who was jailed in October 2021 – see above).

Sakada and Maladyka were transferred to house arrest in March 2021 and Zhukov in May 2021 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2648](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2648)). Kostenko does not appear to be under any restrictions.

Following the October 2020 raids and arrests, Svetlana Sakada, Vladimir Sakada's wife, insisted that her husband "has conducted no crimes against the foundations of the state". She added: "My husband does not admit any guilt". Similarly, Natalya Maladyka, Vladimir Maladyka's wife commented on the early morning raid that: "We don't understand why they treat us like that." ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2617](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2617))

Russian authorities still refuse release of body for Islamic burial

Nearly six months after Russian forces shot dead Crimean Tatar Muslim Nabi Rakhimov in disputed circumstances on 11 May, all attempts to get his body released for an Islamic burial ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2679](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2679)) have so far failed. Investigators initially claimed that they still needed to conduct a thorough autopsy. They then claimed that Rakhimov had been killed "in the course of preventing a terrorist act".

"Under the norms of Islam, in any circumstances the deceased must be buried within 24 hours before the setting of the sun," lawyer and human rights defender Lutfiye Zudiyeva noted. Against international law, Russian law denies the return of bodies of those killed in "terrorist" operations. In 2007, Russian Constitutional Court Judge Anatoly Kononov described this provision as "absolutely immoral, reflecting the most uncivilised, barbaric and base views of previous generations" ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2679](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2679)).

Rakhimov's widow Sokhiba Burkhanova tried to challenge the decision by Senior Investigator Aleksei Skorin that Rakhimov's body cannot be handed over for burial. On 9 August, Simferopol's Kiev District Court rejected Burkhanova's appeal against Investigator Skorin's decision.

On 21 September, Judge Oleg Lebedev at Crimea's Supreme Court in Simferopol rejected Burkhanova's appeal against the lower court decision, according to court records.

"As we know, there was no terrorist act," human rights group Crimean Solidarity on 22 September quoted the lawyer Siyar Panich. "Rakhimov was killed at his place of permanent residence in the course of an operational investigative action. The investigator [Skorin] presented no other reasons or proofs at Kiev District Court."

Burkhanova, who was arrested on the day Russian forces shot her husband Rakhimov dead in May, is in a detention centre in Russia's Krasnodar Region trying to challenge attempts to deport her to Uzbekistan (<https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?country=33>).

=====

## LIST

### Consequences

There are eight interlocking consequences related to "extremism" investigations and convictions for exercising freedom of religion or belief:

- 1) during investigation and even if no trial takes place, inclusion on the Rosfinmonitoring "List of Terrorists and Extremists" ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2687](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2687)). This blocks bank accounts, and causes for problems in finding formal employment, obtaining insurance, buying and selling property, and a range of other financial activities;
- 2) if convicted the prison or suspended prison sentence itself, or possible fines;
- 3) for suspended sentences, the probationary period ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)), which is the time during which any other conviction would send the defendant to prison;
- 4) for those not given prison or suspended sentences, or fines, a possible period of assigned work ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)). This may take the form of a paid job in any organisation, as determined by the correctional centre administering the sentence. The assigned work depends on availability and the convicted person has no right to refuse. Officials check on convicted persons' locations at least once a day;
- 5) a possible period of restrictions on freedom ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)). This normally includes a

curfew between particular hours, a ban on visiting certain places, a ban on leaving one's home town, a ban on attendance at or participation in particular events, a ban on changing one's place of residence, work, or study without the probation authorities' permission, and an obligation to register with probation authorities one to four times per month;

6) sudimost, or the state of having an active criminal record ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)). Individuals may face a harsher sentence if prosecuted and convicted again. Individuals are also barred from holding certain jobs in sectors such as education, finance, the police and similar agencies, and the civil service, and from standing for election. Although there is no legal bar on employment in other sectors, many people find it hard to secure formal work after criminal convictions;

7) for those given prison sentences, administrative supervision ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)) for all of their period of sudimost. Administrative supervision consists of a set of restrictions on movements and activities, and a requirement to register regularly with the police;

8) and for those convicted under Russian Criminal Code Article 282.2 Parts 1 or 2 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2215](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2215)) either compulsory or discretionary bans on holding particular positions or undertaking particular activities ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)).

When known, the categories and lengths of punishment the individual has been given are recorded in the list below.

=====

## CURRENT IMPRISONMENTS

List of those jailed or detained after "extremism"-related convictions for exercising freedom of religion or belief. All those named are Jehovah's Witnesses.

Convictions have been under this Russian Criminal Code article ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2215](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2215)):

- Article 282.2 for "organising" (Part 1), or "participating in" (Part 2), "the activity of a social or religious association or other organisation in relation to which a court has adopted a decision legally in force on liquidation or ban on the activity in connection with the carrying out of extremist activity". All the Crimean convictions have been under Part 1 of this Article.

This list is broken down by category of punishment with regional headings referring to where people were tried, not where they are imprisoned.

## SENTENCES HAVE ENTERED LEGAL FORCE

- Republic of Crimea

1) Sergei Viktorovich Filatov (born 6 June 1972)

Added to Rosfinmonitoring List ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2687](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2687)): 17 January 2019 ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2444](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2444))

Sentenced: 5 March 2020, Dzhankoi District Court

Russian Criminal Code Article: 282.2, Part 1

Punishments: 6 years + after release 5 year ban on educational activity, speaking publicly and publishing in the media and on the internet ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2552](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2552))

Appeal: unsuccessful – 26 May 2020, Supreme Court of the Republic of Crimea

Due for release from prison: 23 January 2026

Restrictions on freedom ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)) due to end: 23 January 2027

Ban on activities ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)): 23 January 2026 to 23 January 2031

Sudimost, administrative supervision and being on Rosfinmonitoring List ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)) due to end: 23 January 2035

Prison address: 347803 Rostovskaya oblast, g. Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, ul. Morskaya 94, FKU Ispravitelnaya koloniya No. 12 UFSIN



Rossii po Rostovskoy oblasti, Russian Federation

2) Artyom Vyacheslavovich Gerasimov (born 13 January 1985)

Added to Rosfinmonitoring List ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2687](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2687)): 2 July 2020

Sentenced: 5 March 2020, Yalta City Court

Russian Criminal Code Article: 282.2, Part 1

Punishments: fine of 400,000 Russian Roubles ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2552](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2552))

Appeal: changed to 6 years' imprisonment ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2577](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2577)) - 4 June 2020, Supreme Court of the Republic of Crimea

Due for release from prison: 3 June 2026

Restrictions on freedom ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)) due to end: unknown

Sudimost, administrative supervision and being on Rosfinmonitoring List ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)) due to end: no later than 3 June 2036

Prison address: 347803 Rostovskaya oblast, g. Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, ul. Morskaya 94, FKU Ispravitelnaya koloniya No. 12 UFSIN Rossii po Rostovskoy oblasti, Russian Federation

- Sevastopol

3) Viktor Vladimirovich Stashevsky (born 11 July 1966)

Added to Rosfinmonitoring List ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2687](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2687)): 11 July 2019  
([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2496](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2496))

Sentenced: 29 March 2021, Gagarin District Court

Russian Criminal Code Article: 282.2, Part 1

Punishments: 6 years 6 months' jail + after release 7 year ban on educational activity, speaking publicly and publishing in the media and on the internet ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2648](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2648))

Appeal: unsuccessful – 10 August 2021, Sevastopol City Court ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2694](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2694))

Due for release from prison: 24 July 2027

Restrictions on freedom ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)) due to end: 24 July 2028

Ban on activities ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)): 24 July 2027 to 24 July 2034

Sudimost, administrative supervision and being on Rosfinmonitoring List ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)) due to end: 24 July 2036

Prison address: 352671, Krasnodarsky krai, Apsheronsky raion, g. Khadyzhensk, ul. Griboyedova 42, FKU Ispravitelnaya koloniya No. 9 UFSIN Rossii po Krasnodarskomu krayu, Russian Federation

**SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT - DETAINED AWAITING APPEAL**

- Sevastopol

4) Igor Yakovlevich Schmidt (born 18 June 1972)

Sentenced: 22 October 2021, Gagarin District Court

Russian Criminal Code Article: 282.2, Part 1

Punishments: 6 years + after release 6 year ban on educational activity, speaking publicly and publishing in the media and on the internet ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2694](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2694))

Appeal: could appeal to Sevastopol City Court

Restrictions on freedom ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)) due to end: 1 year after release from prison

Detention centre address: 295006 Respublika Krym, g. Simferopol, bul. Lenina 4, FKU Sledstvenny izolyator No. 1 UFSIN Rossii po Respublike Krym i g. Sevastopolyu

#### RELEASED BUT UNDER RESTRICTIONS/SUPERVISION

- Republic of Crimea

1) Renat Rustemovich Suleimanov (born 30 August 1969)

Russian Criminal Code Article: 282.2, Part 1

Jail term completed: 24 December 2020

Restrictions on freedom ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)) due to end: 24 December 2021

Sudimost, administrative supervision and being on Rosfinmonitoring List ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2681](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2681)) due to end: 24 December 2029

(END)

Full reports on freedom of thought, conscience and belief in Crimea  
(<https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?query=&religion=all&country=86>)

For more background, see Forum 18's Crimea religious freedom survey ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2051](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2051))

Forum 18's reports and analyses on freedom of thought, conscience and belief in Russia within its internationally-recognised territory (<https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?query=&religion=all&country=10>)

Forum 18's compilation of Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) freedom of religion and belief commitments ([https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=1351](https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1351))

Follow us on Twitter @Forum\_18 ([https://twitter.com/forum\\_18](https://twitter.com/forum_18))

Follow us on Facebook @Forum18NewsService (<https://www.facebook.com/Forum18NewsService>)

All Forum 18 text may be referred to, quoted from, or republished in full, if Forum 18 is credited as the source.

All photographs that are not Forum 18's copyright are attributed to the copyright owner. If you reuse any photographs from Forum 18's website, you must seek permission for any reuse from the copyright owner or abide by the copyright terms the copyright owner has chosen.

© Forum 18 News Service. All rights reserved. ISSN 1504-2855.

---

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

Forum 18  
Postboks 6603  
Rodeløkka  
N-0502 Oslo  
NORWAY