

# RUSSIA

*(January-June 2015)*

## **Introduction**

The situation with hate crime in Russia remains twofold.

On the one hand, Russia has a sufficiently developed legislation protecting minority rights, combatting xenophobia, etc. Public officials on all levels are actively speaking against xenophobia. The new Federal Agency on Nationalities Affairs is designed to focus on ensuring interethnic harmony in the country. The government continuously provides grants to relevant NPOs. In 2015, a significant decrease in hate crime was observed. This trend is most likely caused by two factors – activity of the law enforcement and the focus of local nationalists on the conflict in Ukraine.

On the other hand, there are some issues in law enforcement practices, specifically discrimination of minorities – immigrants, members of “sects” and LGBT.

Russians society has formed a very negative perception of these three minority groups, facilitated by media portrayal. As a result, majority of the population, including those who have never met an LGBT, for example, are firmly against same-sex marriage and are convinced that homosexuality and paedophilia are the same. Members of “non-traditional” religions, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, face similar problems. Large quantities of migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus increased the level of anti-Muslim sentiments and the perception of migrants as terrorists and criminals, as well as people who take jobs away from local people and force low wages on the labour market. Discrimination of migrants is noticeable in employment, housing, healthcare and education. All of this is reflected in the behaviour of law enforcement officers, who are often reluctant to assist aforementioned minorities.

In 2015, a new trend of discrimination emerged, particularly related to Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, where titular languages are forced on ethnic basis at the cost of Russian language studies.

At the same time, training of local minority languages teachers for preschool and school education is being gradually curtailed.

### **1) Changes in legislation affecting minorities.**

- Discriminatory legislation affecting minorities.

Russian legislation does not contain acts that discriminate against minority groups. However, several legislative processes over the past few years that could indicate the formation of a legislative base indirectly aimed against the rights of certain groups. One of such laws – Article 6.21 of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences (CAO) – was adopted in 2013 and introduced administrative responsibility for the propaganda of “non-traditional sexual relations” among minors. Another example is the Law “On Amendments to Article 148 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation in order

to counter the insult of religious beliefs and feelings of citizens” (commonly referred to as the law on protecting religious feelings). The issue with both aforementioned laws is not in their spirit (one seeks to protect children from potentially harmful information and the other protects religious feelings), but in the ambiguity of their wording, which can lead to violation of the rights of children, homosexuals, atheists, etc.

Offences that fall under the “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations” law are punishable by a fine of 4 to 5 thousand rubles. Government officials who committed such offences would have to pay a fine of 40 to 50 thousand rubles, legal entities – 800 thousand to 1 million rubles<sup>1</sup>. Offences committed online or on other forms of media are punished more severely: individuals – 50 to 100 thousand rubles, officials – 100 to 200 thousand rubles, legal entities could face a suspension of up to 90 days.

Propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations implies “distribution of information aimed at forming non-traditional sexual attitudes in minors, encouraging non-traditional sexual relations and distorting the perception of social equivalence of traditional and non-traditional sexual relations, or imposing the information on non-traditional sexual relations that cause interest in such relations”<sup>2</sup>. The law does not expand on several terms, including “spread of information” or “imposition of information”, etc. This creates opportunity for abuse in law enforcement practice, especially towards LGBT educational projects aimed at teenagers.

Besides this federal law, a number of its regional counterparts are in force in St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Kaliningrad, Kostroma, Arkhangelsk, Ryazan, Samara, Magadansk and Krasnodar regions.

The law on protecting religious feelings is also fraught with ambiguous terms, technically allowing legal prosecution for criticism or “unfavourable” portrayal of religion in artistic works. For example, the law introduces the concept of “public actions that express clear disrespect towards society and that aim to insult religious feelings” (Section 1, Article 148 of the Criminal Code)<sup>3</sup>, but does not expand on any of the above terms. This allows for a broad application of the law, potentially infringing on the rights of atheists or members of so-called non-traditional religious.

Punishment for such offence amounts to a fine of up to 300 thousand rubles, or 240 hours to a year of compulsory labour, with a maximum year of imprisonment. Those who insult religious feelings in places of worship will be fined up to 500 thousand rubles, sentenced to up to 480 hours of compulsory labour, or sentenced to 3 years imprisonment<sup>4</sup>.

At the same time, it should be noted that this legislation was not developed further during the monitored period; no new discriminatory laws have been adopted or considered.

- Discriminatory practices against minorities.

There have been numerous reports of religious, ethnic and LGBT discrimination in Russia in 2015.

Religious discrimination affected the following groups: Jehovah’s Witnesses (28 cases), Muslims (7 cases), new religious movements (5 cases), Protestants (3 cases), Catholics (1 case).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=49778>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2013/06/30-26423.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.rg.ru/2013/06/30/zashita-site-dok.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ntv.ru/novosti/626658#ixzz30ActuNff>

Pressure on Jehovah's Witnesses had increased during the monitored period, with the number of incidents in the first half of 2015 being larger than in the whole 2014 (at the same time, the number of anti-Muslim incidents had decreased).

When it comes to ethnic discrimination, chairman of the Association of Finno-Ugric Peoples of the Russian Federation Petr Tultaev said on May 19 that due to new higher education standards, national departments for training school and pre-school minority language teachers have been shut down in many institutions. In addition, Ministry of Education did not approve a single school textbook for national language or literature. Chairman of Tatar FNCA I. Gilmutdinov noted that it is extremely difficult to convince regional heads to open ethnic-cultural schools. He clarified that minority textbooks do exist, but only for primary schools<sup>5</sup>.

On the other hand, school hours for national languages in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan were taken from Russian language lessons<sup>6</sup>. The number of Russian language courses in Tatarstan is almost 50% less than average in the country<sup>7</sup>. On June 1, it was reported that Tatar children in Tatarstan are forced into groups for learning Tatar language in schools, in order to increase the indicator of pupils studying local language<sup>8</sup>. Compulsory Tatar language education is also introduced in preschools, for all nationalities and without parents' consent<sup>9</sup>.

Crimean Tatars are facing some difficulties in Crimea. Members of Crimean Tatar Majlis were prohibited to stage any public action on May 18<sup>th</sup> – anniversary of Crimean Tatar deportation, which caused outrage among members of this minority<sup>10</sup>. On May 18, around 70 Crimean Tatars who were planning to hold an unsanctioned commemorative action in Simferopol were detained by police. However, they were released shortly afterwards<sup>11</sup>.

On April 21, it was reported that Sochi law enforcement took down banners dedicated to the Armenian genocide. Armenian community was also asked to cancel their commemorative action timed for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the genocide. This seemed rather strange, given that President Putin attended a commemorative ceremony in Erevan<sup>12</sup>.

There have been several incidents concerning the LGBT community. On March 8, Moscow police detained an activist holding a rainbow flag in the so-called "Hyde Park"<sup>13</sup>.

On March 25, General Prosecution appealed to Roskomnadzor media watchdog to block access to the Deti-404 LGBT project on the grounds of the already overturned court verdict<sup>14</sup>.

On March 26, it was reported that an LGBT teenager from Nizhny Novgorod was forcibly placed in a psychiatric hospital<sup>15</sup>.

On April 21, Kirov District Court refused to reinstate an LGBT teacher woman as a teacher<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49491>

<sup>6</sup> <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49491>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.kavkazgeoclub.ru/content/v-halifat-manit-ideya>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/society/68648.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://rusfed24.ru/2015/05/14/spasite-russkiy-yazyk-i-mezhnatsionalnoe-soglasie-v-natsionalnyih-respublikah-rossii-otkryitoe-pismo-2/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.kavkazgeoclub.ru/content/krymskie-tatary-razocharovanie-i-nedoverie>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2729297>

<sup>12</sup> <http://hro.org/node/22025>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2015/03/09-30924.htm>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2015/03/25-31043.htm>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2015/03/31-31089.htm>

On May 17, Moscow police detained 17 people during an LGBT flash mob, dedicated to the International Day Against Homophobia<sup>17</sup>.

On June 11, an LGBT exhibition at the Red Square gallery was disrupted by police and “Centre E” officers. On June 13, when organisers attempted to resume the exhibition on the street, its materials were seized by the police<sup>18</sup>.

There is evidence suggesting that the state supports Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in pressuring cultural and education institutions that allow atheistic actions or actions that can be regarded as “desecrating the church”. This was most noticeable with regards to the production of the “Tannhauser” opera. Director of the opera was charged with “desecration of items of worship”, but the court soon dismissed the case for lack of evidence. Director of Novosibirsk theatre B. Mezdrich, unwilling to change the production, was sacked on March 29. As later reported by Ministry of Culture, the decision was made due to his “reluctance to consider the social values and disrespect to the opinion of citizens, as well as failure to comply with recommendations of the founder.”<sup>19</sup>

On April 28, it was reported that a theatre play about Saint Ksenia of Petersburg in Kaliningrad was censored due to its comic portrayal of a priest. The play was amended shortly after its premiere, following an appeal from the head of the Department of Culture and Youth Policy<sup>20</sup>.

On April 24, it was reported that head teacher of Kvalynsk School N3 Tatyana Kotserova was ordered to resign due to the “insufficient number” of parents who chose “Foundation of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics” course for their children. Head teacher was accused of celebrating Halloween and of “anti-Orthodox agitation” among parents, who wrote to school administration and asked that they are consulted regarding the presence of an Orthodox priest in history lessons<sup>21</sup>.

- Development of anti-discrimination and anti-extremism legislation

Russia’s anti-extremism legislation is relatively extensive, whereas anti-discrimination legislation is only starting to take shape.

In 2015, a legal conflict arose around the use of Nazi symbols and similar images in academic research and articles, as well as in audio, video and printed materials that do not contain propaganda and (or) justification of Nazism and fascism<sup>22</sup>. On March 3, 2015, Constitutional Court ruled that any display of Nazi attributes or symbols (including similar images) “regardless of its genesis” can cause distress people whose relatives died during the Great Patriotic War<sup>23</sup>, thus nullifying the amendments adopted in 2013. However, on April 15,

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16 <http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2015/04/22-31271.htm>

17 <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/news/1693852.html>

18 <http://yodnews.ru/news/2015/06/13/lgbt>

19 <http://mkrf.ru/press-center/news/ministerstvo/kommentariy-minkultury-rossii-po-kadrovym-izmeneniyam-v-novosibirskom-akademiches>

20 <http://www.znak.com/urfo/news/2015-04-28/1039210.html>

21 <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/society/68238.html>

22 <http://echo.msk.ru/news/980970-echo.html>

23 [http://www.rapsinews.ru/judicial\\_news/20150303/273257814.html#ixzz3UO3vlmxt](http://www.rapsinews.ru/judicial_news/20150303/273257814.html#ixzz3UO3vlmxt)

Roskomnadzor media watchdog issued a clarification, according to which displaying Nazi symbols without “propaganda intent” should not be regarded as violation of the relevant law<sup>24</sup>.

In addition, on May 2, 2015 Russia adopted amendments to the Articles 13.15 and 20.29 of the Code of Administrative Offences, which increased the maximum fine for designing and publishing calls to terrorist and (or) extremist action from 100 thousand to 1 million rubles.

Article 13.15 (abuse of free media) was supplemented with a paragraph that introduced fines for “designing and publishing calls to terrorist action and (or) materials that publicly justify terrorism, or any other materials that call for extremist action or justify such action”<sup>25</sup>.

On June 11, Russian government established the Rules for identifying organisations that collaborated with groups, organisations, movements or persons found guilty in crimes by the Nuremberg Tribunal, or any other courts based on the Nuremberg trials. According to the rules, an organisation may be included in the list by the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the FSB or General Prosecution. The process is conducted within 30 days from the application to the Ministry of Justice<sup>26</sup>.

- State compliance with anti-racism anti-discrimination and anti-extremism legislation.

Two trends have been observed in the first half of 2015.

On the one hand, interethnic peace has been a priority for Russian authorities, which have been taking all the necessary steps to achieve that target. For example, in 2012 Russia established the Council for Interethnic Relations and in 2014 – the Coordinating Council for Implementing the State National Policy under the Ministry of Culture.<sup>27</sup> On April 1, 2015, President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on establishing a Federal Agency for Nationality Affairs, which was to perform the following functions:

a) Development and implementation of the state national policy, legal regulation and provision of public services in the field of state national policy.

b) Implementation of measures aimed at reinforcing the unity of the multinational people of the Russian Federation (Russian nation); provision of interethnic harmony, ethno-cultural development of the Russian nation; protection of rights of national minorities and small indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation.

c) Cooperation with national-cultural autonomies, Cossack communities and other civil society institutions.

d) Development and implementation of state and federal target programmes in the field of interethnic relations.

e) Control over the implementation of the state national policy.

f) Implementation of the state monitoring in the field of interethnic and interreligious relations.

g) Prevention of any forms of discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, religion or language.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://rkn.gov.ru/news/rsoc/news31736.htm>

<sup>25</sup> <http://base.garant.ru/71001234/#ixzz3iUYmRMdT>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.pravo.gov.ru/laws/acts/45/535552.html>

<sup>27</sup> <http://islamrf.ru/news/russia/rusnews/34845/>

h) Prevention of attempts to incite racial, national and religious enmity, hatred or hostility<sup>28</sup>.

Councils for Interethnic Relations and similar committees and work groups already exist in most regions of the Russian Federation. Presently, such institutions are being established at lower levels – in municipalities and districts. Members of the executive hold regular meetings on this topic, while regions develop their own programmes to combat xenophobia and extremism.

More than 50 projects focused on interethnic affairs have received government grants in 2015. Their activities range from working with migrants and refugees to promoting tolerance, cultural festivals, youth camps and combatting extremism<sup>29</sup>.

Since 2014, eight regions of the country implement regular monitoring of interethnic and interreligious relations and early warning systems for possible ethnic conflicts<sup>30</sup>.

Russian courts have been correcting unjust decisions by other authorities. For example, on February 11, Supreme Court of Russian Federation upheld the demands to school clothing in Mordovia, which prohibited religious clothing in education institutions, including hijabs, thus overturning the appeal of the local Muslim community<sup>31</sup>.

Several courts and prosecutors defended the rights of Jehovah's Witnesses (2 cases), Muslims (2 cases), Russian Protestants (1 case), Jews (1 case), members of new religious movements (1 case), LGBT activists (6 cases) and those wrongfully accused of extremism (5 cases).

On the other hand, law enforcement practice leaves a lot to be desired. There have been reports of police reluctance to investigate hate crime, particularly if it is undesirable for local authorities. For example, police in Khabarovsk was unwilling at first to investigate the attack on a local LGBT activist, A. Ermoshkin, citing lack of evidence. Criminal investigation was eventually launched after the prosecution got involved<sup>32</sup>. On May 29, it was reported that Tatarstan Prosecutor's Office did not find signs of extremism in graffiti left by vandals on the Temple Monument to the Fallen Warriors in Kazan, in December 2014<sup>33</sup>. Local authorities have been reluctant to remove xenophobic graffiti. This is often only done after an order from the local prosecution<sup>34</sup>.

- Measures against hate crime (criminal cases, sentences)

In the first half of 2015, 239 people have been sentenced for crimes and offences related to xenophobia. 165 people received non-custodial sentences (97 - fines, 41 - correctional and compulsory labour, 21 - probation, 1 – restriction of freedom, 3 were issued warnings and cautions and 2 were brought to disciplinary responsibility). 72 people received custodial sentences (11 people were sentenced to several days in jail, 3 people were sentenced to prison terms of up to one year, 21 people - for the period from 1 to 5 years, 1 - for a period of 5 to 10

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<sup>28</sup> <http://islamrf.ru/news/russia/rusnews/36266/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://nazaccent.ru/content/16649-dengi-poshli-v-regiony.htm>

<sup>30</sup> <http://regnum.ru/news/society/1929903.html>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=57832>

<sup>32</sup> [http://bluesystem.ru/news\\_topic/?aid=12255](http://bluesystem.ru/news_topic/?aid=12255)

<sup>33</sup> <http://kazan.mk.ru/articles/2015/05/29/prokuratura-tatarstana-ne-usmotrela-ekstremizma-v-nadpisyakh-nakhramepamyatnike-pavshim-voinam.html>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.proklyanao.ru/page/news/item/news-5083293709/>, <http://www.samproc.ru/news/122/11122/>

years, 1 - for the period from 10 to 15 years, 1 - for the period from 15 to 20 years, 1 - for the period from 20 to 25 years, and 3 – life in prison, 2 - sent on compulsory treatment). One person was released from responsibility due to statute of limitations; one person was acquitted; one trial was dismissed due to active repentance. The bias towards non-custodial sentences is largely due to most xenophobic offenses being committed online, such as publishing of xenophobic articles and posts, where fines and compulsory labour prove an effective punishment

Over the same period in 2014, 234 people have been sentenced for similar crimes; in 2013 – 200 people.

The Federal List of Extremist Materials grew by 368 entries to 2867 items. This reflects an increased activity of the law enforcement combatting xenophobia online, with almost the same amount of materials being added in the first half of 2015 as in 12 months of 2014.

According to Russian law enforcement, persons convicted of extremist crime (particularly radical Islamists) are often trying to convert fellow inmates, which is becoming an alarming problem. Federal Security Service (FSB) reports that in some prisons this process is becoming a serious threat<sup>35</sup>.

There have also been cases of wrongful accusations of xenophobia. On March 6, MP Evgeny Fyodorov (United Russia) asked to investigate the activity of Gogol-Centre theatre, noting that the theatre had been subjected to investigations previously, in relation to a play called “Otmorozki”, which was accused of propaganda of homosexuality and paedophilia<sup>36</sup>.

On April 29, Expert Centre of the World Russian Cathedral issued a memo, classifying “insults to Orthodox shrines and members of the church” as Russophobia, referring to articles criticising the ROC<sup>37</sup>.

## **2) Xenophobia and inflammatory statements in the government and media**

A number of such statements have been noted during the monitored period. Most were related to anti-LGBT, anti-immigration and “anti-sect” sentiments.

On April 21, *Kultura* newspaper published an interview with a demographics specialist I. Beloborodov, who claimed that migration could lead to an “ethnic Maidan” that would glorify homosexuality and paedophilia. He added that homosexuality is extremely aggressive and “homosexual dictatorship” reigns in most Western countries<sup>38</sup>.

On June 29, *Rossiya* TV channel broadcasted a film “Special Correspondent, Poison Export”, which was aimed against LGBT activists<sup>39</sup>.

There have also been statements demonising “sects”. On March 12, member of the Presidential Council on Human Rights Yana Lantratova said that “sects” supposedly “played a major role in Ukrainian events”. She alleged that sects have been fermenting a certain ideology among Ukrainian youth and brought up those who burned people alive in Odessa, took photos next to corpses and “liked” the photos on Facebook<sup>40</sup>.

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35 <http://www.sedmitza.ru/text/5544125.html>

36 <http://tass.ru/obschestvo/1813583>

37 <http://www.sedmitza.ru/text/5558230.html>

38 <http://portal-kultura.ru/articles/country/99198-modno-byt-russkim/>

39 <http://www.gay.ru/people/activist/aleksandr-ermoshkin-samoe.html>

40 <http://www.vz.ru/news/2015/3/12/611287.html>

On April 21, Director of the Federal Service for Drug Control (FDCS) Viktor Ivanov accused “non-governmental organisation of the sect variety” of supporting the revolution in Ukraine and the use of drugs during the Maidan protests<sup>41</sup>.

Chairman of the Public Relations and National Policy Committee in Saratov region, Boris Shinchuk, said on March 19 that members of “sects” are not Russian citizens and do not “confirm the existence of the state”<sup>42</sup>.

On February 1 and March 22, Fifth Channel broadcasted a report about how American spies infiltrate Russia as religious missionaries, claiming that Mormons are engaged in espionage for the United States<sup>43</sup>.

On March 26, Vesti news programme showed a report about the “activation of underground religious movements funded by the US, which are disguised as drug and alcohol rehab centres”<sup>44</sup>.

Moscow Prosecutor S. Kudenev told *Moskovsky Komsomolets* newspaper on May 22 that almost 51% of solved crime in the capital have been committed by migrants (20% by foreign nationals), not mentioning that not all crimes are solved and the real proportion of crimes committed by migrants is significantly lower<sup>45</sup>.

On January 11, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published an article by D. Aslamova, which claimed that demonstrations supporting victims of Charlie Hebdo shootings are staged “in order to breed hatred between Muslims and non-Muslims” and so that “France could turn a blind eye to ethnic cleanses committed by Israel”<sup>46</sup>.

On March 4, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published an article by D. Olshansky, which implied that most aggressive opponents to the current regime are Jews<sup>47</sup>.

On April 29, the same newspaper published an article by I. Shamir, which portrayed Israel as an oppressor of Palestinians and Jews as racists<sup>48</sup>.

On January 29, *Literary Gazette* published an interview with Alexandr Kolpaikdi, who claimed that his publishing house “Algoritm” published Goebbels’ “Michael” for academic purposes and fell victim to “professional warriors against anti-Semitism”<sup>49</sup>.

On June 3, the same newspaper published an article that accused Jews of being “ungrateful” to Stalin.<sup>50</sup>

Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, traditionally used xenophobia as means to mobilise support. On April 24, he said that Armenia is

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41 <http://www.rg.ru/2015/04/21/spays-site.html>

42 <http://sarnovosti.ru/news.php?ID=11890>

43

<http://www.mormonnews.ru/%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%8C%D1%8F/%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BA%D1%80%D1%8B%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%8C%D0%BC%D0%BE-%D0%BF%D1%8F%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BC%D1%83-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%83>

44 <http://www.vesti.ru/videos/show/vid/640129/cid/58/>

45 <http://www.mk.ru/moscow/2015/05/21/prokuror-moskvy-v-borbe-s-prestupnostyu-est-massa-ulovok.html>

46 <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26328.2/3210562/>

47 <http://m.kp.ru/society/?top=5>

48 <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26373/3254715/>

49 <http://www.lgz.ru/article/-3-4-6494-28-01-2015/detishche-vadima-kozhinova/>

50 <http://lgz.ru/article/-22-6511-3-06-2015/storonniam-i-supostatam/>

a state that is hostile to Russians, speaking at a session dedicated to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian genocide<sup>51</sup>.

On May 22, Zhirinovskiy said that national republics are seeking to teach Russian children their regional languages in order to “oust Russians from national regions”. He added that it is difficult for a child to learn a language “that ends after 50 kilometres”<sup>52</sup>.

Minister of Culture V. Medinsky told *Moskovsky Komsomolets* on April 1 that B. Mezdrich was sacked for “disrespecting religious feelings”. “If we neglect religious feelings, it will be bad for everyone. In our multinational country, things will be quiet and then something will explode, worse than with Charlie [Hebdo]. This must be resolved in its roots. It was hard to dismiss the director, but I had to. I will do it again if I have to.”<sup>53</sup>

### **3) Statements by government representatives, members of the ruling party and influential politicians against xenophobia and radical nationalism.**

President Vladimir Putin made several statements against xenophobia. Russian President took part in commemorative events dedicated to the Holocaust on January 27 and the Armenian genocide on April 24. At both events, Putin made big speeches, noting that such crimes have no statute of limitations, no date of forgiveness. “Crimes such as the Holocaust must not happen again. This is our common debt and, without exaggeration, the most important and relevant goal for the international community,” Putin said on January 27 in Moscow<sup>54</sup>. “The global community must make every effort to prevent the tragic events of the past from happening again, so that all peoples can live in peace and harmony, not knowing the horrors that result from religious enmity, aggressive nationalism and xenophobia,” President stated in Erevan<sup>55</sup>.



*Russian President Vladimir Putin took part in a memorial rally in Yerevan dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.*

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51 <http://www.cir.ru/docs/duma/302/2732615?QueryID=5529903&HighlightQuery=5529903>

52 <http://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/133003/>

53 <http://www.mk.ru/culture/2015/04/01/vladimir-medinskiy-pomenyayte-khrista-na-magometa-doydete-li-vy-posle-etogo-do-doma.html>

54 <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47529>

55 <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49332>

Speaking at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (March 4), General Prosecution (March 24) and the FSB (March 26), President reminded his state security institutions that combatting extremism should remain their top priority<sup>56</sup>.

Federal and regional officials followed President's rhetoric. Head of the Presidential Administration Sergey Ivanov on February 26 urged Russian investigators to actively combat artificial incitement of interethnic conflicts. According to him, such attempts are most likely occur in Crimea<sup>57</sup>.

On April 14, head of the Federal Security Service (FSB) Alexandr Bortnikov said that law enforcement bodies have identified several hundred radical Islamists in Ural since 2010. "Given the increasing influx of migrants in Ural, we need to establish reliable legal and administrative barriers that can prevent infiltration of persons intending to carry out terrorist acts," he noted<sup>58</sup>.

On March 5, Presidential Representative on Interethnic Cultural Cooperation Mikhail Shvydkoy commended on the scandal around the Tannhauser play in Novosibirsk, criticising the ROC. "Unfortunately, it became common place that regional church authorities or individual members of the Church demand to prohibit certain art and insist on criminal prosecution"<sup>59</sup>.

On June 28, deputy head of the Constitutional Legislation Committee of the Council of Federation Konstantin Dobrynin proposed to enshrine the American principle of "don't ask – don't tell" in Russian legislation regarding "non-traditional sexual orientations". He said that "one can laugh" at America or the tolerant Europe, but it must be recognised that the "world is global" and "it's only a matter of time", when minorities receive equal rights. Dobrynin criticised Russia's current policies towards homosexuals and encouraged the government to find a new legal form that would provide for a "public balance" between the conservative part of society and the rest. He added that it is important to "reduce the level of aggression towards minorities"<sup>60</sup>.

On January 20, Minister of Internal Affairs of Tatarstan, Artyom Khokhorin, said that progress has been made in combatting terrorism and extremism in the republic, but more should be done. He added that radical Islam and neo-Nazi youth remain a threat to the republic.

Russian Minister of Internal Affairs, Alexandr Savenkov, added that more efforts should be made to combat extremism and terrorism, as there is not observed decrease of this trend<sup>61</sup>.

On January 26, Moscow Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War held a commemorative event dedicated to the International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of liberation of Auschwitz. Deputy Mayor for Social Development Leonid Pechatnikov thanked everyone attending at the ceremony. Mayor of Moscow, S. Sobyenin, stressed the importance of remembering these events in his welcoming speech<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47776>, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/48985>, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49006>

<sup>57</sup> <https://news.mail.ru/inregions/crimea/110/politics/21199223/?frommail=1>

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.blagovest-info.ru/index.php?ss=2&s=3&id=61933>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=58069>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.interfax.ru/russia/450210>

<sup>61</sup> <http://islam.ru/news/2015-01-21/12876>

<sup>62</sup> <http://ryazansky.mos.ru/presscenter/news/detail/1539462.html>

On January 26, deputy head of the State Council of the Crimean Republic, head of the Crimean Tatar Movement “Crimea”, Remzi Ilyasov, urged Crimean people to commemorate victims of the Holocaust and prevent any manifestations of hate on the peninsula<sup>63</sup>.

On May 18, head of the Crimean Republic Sergey Aksenov said at the site of the future memorial of deportations in Bakhchisaray that these deportations was one of the most tragic pages in the history of the Crimean people and the government will make sure to keep its memory<sup>64</sup>.

On June 24, a commemorative rally was held in Simferopol, dedicated to the deportations of Armenians, Bulgarians and Greeks<sup>65</sup>.

Firm position of Udmurtia authorities in a local “church scandal” must be noted. On March 5, regional Ministry of Culture and Tourism published a response to priest Vladimir Andrianov, who complained about the play called “Blizzar” (“Metel”). The Ministry said that the play, based on a story by Alexander Pushkin “in no way violates the right and freedom of conscience of believers” and “does not insult religious feelings”. The response also pointed out that “not everyone might like the play”, but modern culture is a mixture of different genres and types of art, and it cannot be standardised under a template.<sup>66</sup>

Minister of Culture and Tourism of Udmurtia, Vladimir Solovyev, said on March 5 that the play will continue in the theatre<sup>67</sup>. On April 14, Izhevsk and Udmurtia Archdiocese had apologised to the Ministry of Culture<sup>68</sup>.

#### **4) Position of migrants and society’s attitude towards migrants, foreigners and other ethnic groups**

- Presence and development of migration legislation

No changes in migration legislation have been recorded in the first half of 2015.

- Compliance of authorities with such legislation (law enforcement practice)

Law enforcement practices with regard to immigration balance between the understanding of economic benefits of immigration and the need to protect immigrants from xenophobic manifestations on the one hand, and the desire to please xenophobic voters on the other.

Federal Migration Service (FMS) reports that as of end of June 2015, there were more than 10 million foreign nationals in Russia. Most are citizens of former Soviet republics. 25% of

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<sup>63</sup> <http://www.c-inform.info/news/id/17973>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.islamnews.ru/news-461678.html>

<sup>65</sup> <http://15minut.org/article/v-simferopole-proshel-miting-pamyati-zhertv-armyan-bolgar-i-grekov-foto-2015-06-24-12-44-44>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=58073>

<sup>67</sup> <https://news.mail.ru/inregions/volgaregion/18/society/21255584/?frommail=1>

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=58526>

those are citizens of Ukraine, 20% - Uzbekistan, 10% - Tajikistan, 8% - Azerbaijan, 5% - Kyrgyzstan and 5% - Armenia<sup>69</sup>.

Russia the highest figure of money transfers by migrants in Europe – more than 20 billion dollars. Around \$3.9 billion, FMS reports, went to Ukraine; \$3.83 billion – Tajikistan; \$2.025 billion – Kyrgyzstan; \$1.4 billion – Azerbaijan; \$0.695 billion – Georgia; \$0.479 billion - Kazakhstan<sup>70</sup>.

As of May 2015, Russia housed 970 thousand Ukrainian refugees, of which more than 500 thousand had temporary residence permits or temporary asylum<sup>71</sup>.

Measures have been taken to streamline migration. As of May 2015, 1.350 million people were prohibited entry due to violating the regulations for entry and stay. The number of so-called “rubber flats” (addresses, where several dozen migrants would be officially registered, but not actually be resident at) was reduced from 10 090 to 1 160.<sup>72</sup>

As of February 2015, Russia had five Unified Migration Centres, where migrants could undergo health checks, pass exams and apply for work patents. However, FMS said that Russia requires more such centres – at least 15-20 across the country<sup>73</sup>.

According to new regulations, since January 2015, foreign workers from visa-free countries can seek employment outside quotas by simply purchasing a work patent. However, application for such permit is extremely complicated. Immigrants have only 30 days to gather all necessary documents, go through medical examination, pass exams on Russian language, culture and law, set up health insurance, provide a legal translation of their passports, fill out necessary forms and then receive the patent. The work patent is about two times more expensive than the previous work permit. Furthermore, the patent is restricted by region - working in other regions leads to deportation<sup>74</sup>.

For the first time, migrants have to physically collect their work patents. As a result, Moscow offices of the Federal Migration Service were overcrowded with applicants. People were complaining about massive queues and authorities admitted that some migrants have no time to go through all procedures. In March 2015, migrants who received patents in 2014 were allowed to extend them for 12 months<sup>75</sup>.

In the first six months since the adoption of new regulations, 1 million work patents have been issued, contributing around 10.5 billion rubles to regional budgets. Moscow, St. Petersburg and the surrounding regions issued the most work patents in the country (238 thousand in Moscow, or 27.8%; 115 thousand in St. Petersburg and Leningrad region, or 13.5%; 95 thousand in Moscow region, or 11.1%)<sup>76</sup>.

Authorities are making efforts to cooperate with migrants and explain new regulations to affected people. For example, on May 27, FMS held a seminar for local minorities at the Cultural

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<sup>69</sup> <http://www.fms.gov.ru/about/statistics/data/details/54891/>

<sup>70</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/politics/2015-06-19/1\\_chinovniki.html](http://www.ng.ru/politics/2015-06-19/1_chinovniki.html)

<sup>71</sup> <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49417>

<sup>72</sup> <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49417>

<sup>73</sup> <http://islamrf.ru/news/russia/rusnews/35887/>

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2709017>

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.fergananews.com/articles/8480>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.rbcdaily.ru/politics/562949996204396>

Centre of Caucasus People. Similar seminars are held regularly, coordinated by the regional Muftiat and the Federal Migration Service<sup>77</sup>.

- Discriminatory practices against migrants.

Discrimination against migrants became more evident since the influx of immigrants from neighbouring states. Migrants have been discriminated in registration, movement, business, employment, education, housing, healthcare, etc. Discrimination against migrant workers, caused by oversights in migration legislation and violation of existing laws by employers, as well as anti-immigration sentiments in the society, has been common in various context. However, such cases are rarely reported on in the media.

There have been reports of exploitation of migrants, when they were paid low wages or no wages at all. On April 6, it was reported that construction workers from Tajikistan building the “Children’s World” store in Moscow have been underpaid by more than 10 million rubles in wages. Many of them were deported from the country. Other sources also indicate that Moscow employers collectively owe migrant workers more than 3 billion rubles.<sup>78</sup>

Migrants are also discriminated in the housing market, particularly when property owners prefer to let their property to “Russians” or “Slavs”. Migrants are also subject to extra attention of the police on the street.

In 2014, Ministry of Education and Science prohibited schools from accepting children whose parents do not have a permanent or long-term residency registration in the region. As a result, children of foreign and internal migrants have been put in a vulnerable position, with their fates depending on the decision of local officials and school administrations<sup>79</sup>. Based on the aforementioned order, Tver school N 34 expelled two Uzbek students, whose residency permits have expired (their father, meanwhile, had a residency permit until 2019)<sup>80</sup>. This is likely to be one case out of many.

In Moscow, decisions regarding deportations are made in no more than 3 minutes. Migrants are not told their rights, not provided an interpreter, and their cases are often considered “in batches”. Chertanovsky Court is holding a record in the number of administrative cases considered in the first six months of 2015, having deported more than 2 thousand people. It is followed by Sherbinsky District Court, which considered 1.6 thousand administrative cases in six months<sup>81</sup>.

Deportation centre in Sakharovo (Greater Moscow) is infamous for its poor living conditions. Detained persons are not allowed to go out of the building and meals are of extremely poor quality. Furthermore, the centre fails to provide sufficient medical care for

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<sup>77</sup> <http://islam.ru/news/2015-05-28/1427>

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.islamnews.ru/news-456518.html>

<sup>79</sup> <https://meduza.io/feature/2015/08/05/kuda-bezhat>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo.phpfbid=1700916536801881&set=a.1422467191313485.1073741830.100006506536109&type=1&theater>

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2782851>

detained migrants. Attention to this particular centre was brought by a suicide attempt of a migrant in February, which resulted in a change of management<sup>82</sup>.

- Social assistance for migrants.

The Law “On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens” regulates the application of medical and social services to foreign nationals during his/her stay on the Russian territory. Under this Law and Paragraph 3 of the “Provision for the guarantee of housing, financial and medical assistance for foreign nationals and stateless persons during the period of their stay in the Russian Federation”, the main burden of providing medical and social care for foreign nationals is borne by the receiving party. However if a foreign national concluded an employment or a civil service contract (employment), he/she shall have certain rights and obligations of an employee, including the right to employment and appropriate work conditions, guaranteed payment, complete and reliable information about health and safety, compensation for damage caused in connection with the performance of duties, etc.

Foreign national must have the compulsory health insurance to receive medical care (except for first aid and emergency care, which is provided free of charge).

- Negative attitude of the community towards immigrants, foreigners, various ethnic groups.

Anti-immigration sentiments are gradually decreasing in the Russian society. Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM) published two reports on February 17 and March 31, showing that only 1% of respondents considered migration policy as the most relevant issue in the country<sup>83</sup>. Levada Centre survey published on March 16 indicated that 9% of people consider the “influx of migrants” as the most acute issue<sup>84</sup>.

However, anti-immigration attitudes continue to be very common. Migrantophobic slogans have been heard at the official trade union demonstration in Moscow on May 1<sup>85</sup>.

Researchers believe that migrantophobia is fuelled by issues in communication between locals and migrants from other regions. Furthermore, successful integration of migrants in various social structures seems to be raising the dissatisfaction of locals<sup>86</sup>.

At the same time, the most worrying issue for Russian people is inflation and social problems<sup>87</sup>. In recent years, more Russians became worried about the “LGBT problem”, especially due to (largely negative) media coverage of this group.

Levada Centre survey conducted on March 27-30 showed that 37% of Russians believe that homosexuality is a disease that needs to be treated. 13% believe that homosexuality is a perversion. 25% believed that it is a consequence of promiscuity. Only 11% believed that homosexuality is a sexual orientation that starts from birth. 18% believed that LGBT people

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82 <http://old.refugee.ru/news/sluchaem-v-saharovo-zanyalis-pravozashhitniki/%3Cbr%20/%3E>

83 <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=115209>, <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=115151>

84 <http://www.levada.ru/16-03-2015/trevozhashchie-problemy-i-pretenzii-k-pravitelstvu>

85 <https://www.facebook.com/varfolomeev/posts/10202755441286810?fref=nf>

86 <http://www.liberal.ru/articles/6766#.VW3SvQW6Umw.facebook>

87 <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=115209,%20http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=115151>

must be prosecuted by law. 37% believed that such people must be treated. 25% believed that LGBT people should be “left alone” and only 7% thought that they should be able to “live with dignity”.

More than two-thirds of respondents (65%) have negative attitudes towards the LGBT: aversion and fear (24%), irritation (22%), suspicion (19%)<sup>88</sup>.

Public opinion polls also reflect Islamophobic sentiments in the society. Public Opinion Foundation survey published on April 16 demonstrated that just under a quarter of respondents would agree that Islam played a largely favourable role in Russia’s history. More than a quarter of respondents thought the opposite. Quarter of Russian people believe that Islam plays a positive part in modern Russia; a third believe the opposite. Opinions regarding the role of Islam in the world as a whole are more polarised: 20% positive against 40% negative responses<sup>89</sup>.

More recently, a lot of aggressive criticism was directed at media and art that supposedly insults religious feelings, which was largely catalysed by the January Charlie Hebdo attack in France.

Muslim leaders were the first to make such statements.

On January 16, Dagestan Mufti A. Abdulaev accused *Charlie Hebdo* journalists who were killed in the terrorist attack of insulting Prophet Muhammad and Muslim believers<sup>90</sup>.

On January 26, Interreligious Council of Russia issued a statement regarding freedom of speech and religious feelings, where it opposed the “liberal secular approach”. In part, the statement reads: “Rude remarks and blasphemous cartoons that insult religious feelings undoubtedly provoke conflicts on religious and ethnic grounds. Therefore, all public figures need to be especially careful with regards to consequences to their actions.”<sup>91</sup>

Leaders of Caucasus republics, populated largely by Muslims, blamed the victims of the January terrorist attack for provoking it, and even identified “enemies of Islam” in Russia. On January 8, Head of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov accused Chief Editor of Radio Echo of Moscow Alexei Venediktov of turning the radio station into an “anti-Islamic loudspeaker”. He urged the authorities to deal with the radio that “sows hatred between people and nations”, adding that otherwise “there will be someone who will call Venediktov to account”<sup>92</sup>. He also criticised Yukos CEO Mikhail Khodorkovsy for proposing all press to publish Prophet Muhammad cartoons in response to Charlie Hebdo attacks, calling Khodorkovsky his “personal enemy”<sup>93</sup>.

On January 18, head of Dagestan R. Abdulatipov said that *Charlie Hebdo* journalists have been supposedly provoking anti-Islamic sentiments in Europe for many years. Calls to reprint the cartoon in other media, according to him, is “more insults to religious feelings”<sup>94</sup>.

On January 23, Abdulatipov alluded to his opinion that Paris attacks in January could have been an anti-Islamic provocation staged by the United States in order to “encourage anti-Islamic sentiments and completely subordinate Europe to the USA.” He added that people of

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<sup>88</sup> [http://www.levada.ru/15-05-2015/nevidimoe-menshinstvo-k-probleme-gomofobii-v-rossii&sa=U&ved=0CAsQFjACahUKEwjo6begwe\\_HAhVLiRoKHR32Cog&client=internal-uds-cse&usg=AFQjCNE2u3mCiDgbTGbp-G3ZqYlaQtyp\\_Q](http://www.levada.ru/15-05-2015/nevidimoe-menshinstvo-k-probleme-gomofobii-v-rossii&sa=U&ved=0CAsQFjACahUKEwjo6begwe_HAhVLiRoKHR32Cog&client=internal-uds-cse&usg=AFQjCNE2u3mCiDgbTGbp-G3ZqYlaQtyp_Q)

<sup>89</sup> <http://fom.ru/TSennosti/12121>

<sup>90</sup> <http://islam.ru/news/2015-01-16/12831>

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3966511.html>

<sup>92</sup> <http://instagram.com/p/xos2OpiRri/?modal=true>

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1882918.html#ixzz3OJt4DEmn>

<sup>94</sup> <http://islam.ru/news/2015-01-18/12857>

Dagestan are against terrorism, but also against actions that insult religious feelings of millions of believers<sup>95</sup>.

A similar position was expressed by the majority of the population, which corresponds to the common values of Eurasian civilization, where freedom of speech and expression are not a priority. According to a survey published in January on wciom.ru, 30% of respondents believed that the terrorist attack in France was provoked by journalists' disregard for religious feelings. Another 25% thought it was due to the excessively soft policy towards media in France<sup>96</sup>.

## 5) Incitement of religious and ethnic hatred

- Calls for ethnic and religious hatred in mass media and mass communications, graffiti.

The media continues to be the main source of calls for interethnic and interreligious enmity in Russia. A significant role is played by Russian internet, filled with xenophobia and calls for violence.

Most popular extreme right websites are “Right News”, “Right News Agency”, “Russian Information Agency”, “Russian Observer”, “Russian Platform”, “Russian Imperial Movement”, “National Resistance”, “Velesova Sloboda”, “RAC Forum”, rusnat.org, as well as “Sputnik and Pogrom” and Livejournal blogging site. Several examples of such publications are given below:

On February 12, it was reported that member of the St. Petersburg Jewish Centre, Leokadia Frenkel, is being bullied on the social networks. She was accused of helping “children of migrant criminals, who commit 70% of crime in Russia and 80% of rape in St. Petersburg”<sup>97</sup>.

On February 20, it was reported that the screening of a movie called “*Holocaust – Wallpaper Glue?*” sparked a wave of hatred towards Jews in Kostroma. Some members of a popular online forum proposed to “arrange a Holocaust” on the forum, as the “carrier of world Zionism” and expressed dissatisfaction that “not all of them were burnt”<sup>98</sup>.

On March 6, host of “State of Affairs” programme on Radio Echo of Moscow, Sergey Parkhomenko, received a text, saying: “When will you, *Jew-face*, finally be shot?”

Some calls of such nature have been noted in popular media outlets and public figures. This concerns anti-immigrant, anti-LGBT, anti-Islam and anti-Semitic sentiments.

For example, on May 1, member of St. Petersburg Legislative Assembly, V. Milonov, tried to disrupt an LGBT march and threatened to “eliminate all homo-organisations”<sup>99</sup>.

Orthodox activists who attacked an unsanctioned LGBT rally in Moscow on May 30 were holding a banner, reading: “No to Euro-gay values! No to Euro-gay development! Only Russia! Only victory!”<sup>100</sup>

Several cases of Russophobic graffiti have been reported in spring-summer 2015. Most cases occurred in Tatarstan.

In March, graffiti saying “Down with the Moscow-Cheka junta”, “Death to occupiers”, “Freedom to the Tatar nation,” were found in a subway station in Kazan<sup>101</sup>.

<sup>95</sup> <http://islamrf.ru/news/russia/rusnews/35599/>

<sup>96</sup> <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=115127>

<sup>97</sup> <https://riafan.ru/212447-sotrudnitsu-peterburgskogo-evreyskogo-tsentra-travyat-v-sotssetyah/>

<sup>98</sup> <http://7x7-journal.ru/item/54580>

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2015/05/01-31354.htm>

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2015/05/30-31542.htm>

In April, graffiti saying “Russians go home” was found in the Tatar capital<sup>102</sup>.  
On June 8, Russophobic graffiti and calls to violence were found in Volohva<sup>103</sup>.

- Presence and popularity of radical nationalist literature, films, music. Ultra-nationalist rock bands and their concerts.

Xenophobic literature is regularly published in Russia (most of all – anti-Semitic<sup>□</sup>). There are several publishers who make these books part of their business plan. The largest of these is “Algorithm” publishing house, followed by “Russian Truth”, “Institute of Russian Civilisation” (mainly engaged in reprinting early 20th century works), “Book World” and “Mitrakov”. The latter is specialised in publishing anti-Semitic works of the self-proclaimed “academic” Levashov.

The most comprehensive set of xenophobic literature could be found at book fairs in the All-Russian Exhibition Centre in March and September, where all five aforementioned publishers were present. This literature is also sold in respectable bookstores.

For example, on January 5, it was reported that a book by R. Klyuchnikov called “Destalinisation – from Churchill to Medvedev” is being sold in St. Petersburg Book House under the section “Lectures in People’s University”. The book was dedicated to identifying the revolutionary movement and the Soviet regime with the Jewish government, which Stalin supposedly fought against. The book also repeated the usual anti-Semitic theories about the Jewish government in Russia since 1991<sup>104</sup>.

Russia has a number of extreme right musical bands. Most popular among them is a band called “Kolovrat”. Their concerts are usually semi-underground. The only exception is the “Russian March” in Moscow.

## **6) Radical nationalist groups and parties.**

- Presence of neo-Nazi and ultra-nationalist groups, movements, political parties (both in the centre and in the localities).

One of the largest Russian parliamentary parties that actively uses xenophobia as an integral part of its ideology is LDPR, led by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (most serious political actors used xenophobia and migrantophobia in their propaganda, including the liberal Yabloko Party). Although, since LDPR is a “one-man party”, most xenophobic rhetoric is also related to Zhirinovskiy’s statements.

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<sup>101</sup> <http://kazan.mk.ru/articles/2015/05/29/prokuratura-tatarstana-ne-usmotrela-ekstremizma-v-nadpisvyakh-na-khramepamyatnike-pavshim-voinam.html>

<sup>102</sup> [https://vk.com/event54131472?w=wall-54131472\\_1515%2Fall](https://vk.com/event54131472?w=wall-54131472_1515%2Fall)

<sup>103</sup> <http://konkretno.ru/2015/06/09/v-volxove-zakrashivali-antiruskie-nadpisi.htm>

• Possibly because other phobias (e.g. Islamophobia) do not yet have as much conspiracy theories behind them.

<sup>104</sup> [HTTP://WWW.ECHO.MSK.RU/BLOG/BORIS\\_VIS/1468230-ECHO/](HTTP://WWW.ECHO.MSK.RU/BLOG/BORIS_VIS/1468230-ECHO/)

Leader of the Rodina party, which was the main source of radical nationalism in the mid-2000s, is still in parliament (although, A. Zhuravlev passed into Duma on a United Russia list).

Among the officially registered nationalist parties, there is the “Russian All-National Union”, “Great Fatherland” party (anti-West Stalinists) and V. Milov’s Democratic Choice party, which combines liberal values with nationalism.

Majority of radical nationalist parties established in 2012, could not pass registration despite the liberalisation of political party rules, though some parties deliberately avoided it.

One of the largest Russian nationalist organisations is the Ethno-Political Association “Russians”, established from the banned Movement Against Illegal Immigration and the Slavic Union. Founders of “Russians” tried to register a Party of Nationalists in 2012, however for various reasons this project was not completed and the two brands exist in parallel. New Force party also remains unregistered (founded by MGIMO Professor V. Solovyov), along with the National Democratic Party (K. Krylov and V. Kralin), National Socialist Initiative (based in St. Petersburg and headed by D. Bobrov), “Restrukt” movement (M. Martsinkevich, recently arrested for inciting ethnic hatred), Black Hundred group (A. Shtilmark), “Union of Russian Nation” (A. Turik). Besides these organisations (mostly based in Moscow and St. Petersburg), there are many smaller groups, largely represented on the Internet – some with loud brands, such as the Russian National Union (RNE). Of the regional organisations, Northern Frontier (Republic of Komi) is most noteworthy.

- Neo-Nazi and radical nationalist influence over the local/central government and the civil society, including oppositional and human rights organisations.

Nationalists are not represented in Russian parliament and do not have any significant influence over the government policy. However, there is a definite demand for nationalism in the society. At the federal level, nationalist influence is manifested through extreme right-wing statements made by certain government officials, such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy or Alexei Navalny. For example, in February the latter published an anti-Semitic joke on Facebook, proposing to chant “Medvedev goes to synagogue – spring goes, give spring a way” at an oppositional rally. The slogan was later replaced with the words, “Here used to be an unfunny joke about a synagogue”<sup>105</sup>.

Sometimes, extreme right influence is reflected in the daily life of citizens, when Russians do not even realise that their actions are racist, for example. On March 4, Edlves corporation, trading in cleaning products, placed a billboard in Samara mocking President Barack Obama’s race.<sup>106</sup>

Radical Islamists are becoming more active in the country, particularly members of the so-called Islamic State. On March 23, Presidential envoy to the North Caucasus, Sergey Melikov, said that radical and extremist organisations are known to recruit local students to their ranks<sup>107</sup>.

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<sup>105</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/navalny/posts/943354792350271>, <http://9tv.co.il/news/2015/02/26/197960.html>

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<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=635996473171129&set=a.318642751573171.63645.100002823456594&type=1>

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.blagovest-info.ru/index.php?ss=2&s=3&id=61654>

Nationalists are present in some local governments, but in small quantities. Thus, their influence over these bodies is limited.

It is worth noting government's support for the Russian International Conservative Forum in St. Petersburg, organised by the Rodina party (Deputy Prime Minister D. Rogozin is its informal patron). Party's press release said that the forum will aim to facilitate cooperation between national conservative forces in Europe and Russia. The event, held on March 22 in Holiday Inn, was attended by several infamous figures, including leaders of xenophobic and anti-Semitic parties such as R. Fiore (Italy), Nick Griffin (UK), U. Voigt (Germany).

However, a media storm around the Forum discouraged officials from attending the event (Rodina party was represented there by a member of its political council, F. Biryukov)<sup>108</sup>.

## 7) Public actions of extremist and nationalist groups

The largest nationalist public action in the first half of 2015 was the so-called "Russian May Day".



*Poster of nationalists calling to take part in the action*

However, this year's "May Day" demonstrated the reducing popularity of nationalists due to their disagreements on the "Ukrainian issue". Actions were held in only seven cities, most gathering only several dozen people. Events in Moscow and St. Petersburg gathered no more than 200 people, which can be considered a failure<sup>109</sup>. Other public actions were no more

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.newtimes.ru/articles/detail/96216>, <https://meduza.io/feature/2015/03/23/soyuz-ultrapravyyh-sil>, <http://novayagazeta.spb.ru/articles/9567/>

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2015/05/d31918/>, [http://vk.com/wall21503935\\_54773](http://vk.com/wall21503935_54773), <http://nsi14.info/lenta/news2394/>, <http://rusimperia.tv/news/id23453.html>, <http://rusnat.com/v-astrahani-proshyol-russkij-pervomaj/>, <http://rusnat.com/v-nizhnem-novgorode-proshyol-russkij-pervomaj/>, <http://rusimperia.tv/news/id23453.html>, [http://vk.com/club37160983?w=wall-37160983\\_236](http://vk.com/club37160983?w=wall-37160983_236), [http://vk.com/wall199092368\\_310](http://vk.com/wall199092368_310)

successful, except for the January “anti-cartoon” (Charlie Hebdo) demonstrations held in North Caucasus republic, which were directly supported by local governments.

On January 19, a large “anti-cartoon” march was held in Grozny, gathering approximately a million people holding banners that read: “No Charlie Hebdo”, “Hand’s Off Prophet Muhammad”, etc.<sup>110</sup> Head of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov spoke at the rally and spoke against insults to religious feelings<sup>111</sup>.

On January 23, a similar demonstration gathered around 20 000 people in Makhachkala<sup>112</sup>.

- Presence of “football xenophobia” and racism amongst sports fans.

Football xenophobia is a common phenomenon in Russia. This is true for fans of the less popular teams as well as large football clubs.

On March 15, 2015, fans of Torpedo FC shouted racist abuse at a Brazilian player from Zenit FC<sup>113</sup>.

On April 5, Torpedo FC fans displayed Nazi symbols in a game against Arsenal FC in Tula<sup>114</sup>.

Some sports commentators have also made xenophobic remarks, which was previously unheard of. On June 10, commentator Alexei Andronov called Shakhter FC trainer M. Lucescu a “dirty gypsy”<sup>115</sup>.

Sports officials have been trying to misrepresent the situation. On June 4, speaking at a seminar against discrimination in football, Deputy Minister of Sports Natalia Parshikova said that Russia does not have a high level of xenophobia in football. She admitted that such problems exist, just like in other countries, but disagreed with the view that there is a high level of xenophobia in the country<sup>116</sup>.

## 8) Racist attacks, violence and terror

### *Indicators:*

- Vandalism in cemeteries, attacks on religious buildings.

During the monitored period, 35 cases of xenophobic graffiti, vandalism and threats have been recorded. Comparing to previous years, the number of such cases has decreased (53 in 2014; 77 in 2013). This corresponds to the general trend of reduced nationalist activity. There have been no cases of vandalism in cemeteries. However, attacks on and desecration of religious objects constitutes for 35% of cases of xenophobic vandalism and threats. 5 cases were anti-

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<sup>110</sup> <http://islamrf.ru/news/russia/rusnews/35520/>

<sup>111</sup> <http://islam.ru/news/2015-01-19/12860>

<sup>112</sup> <http://www.islamnews.ru/news-448391.html>

<sup>113</sup> <http://rsport.ru/football/20150318/815925308.html>

<sup>114</sup> <http://rsport.ru/football/20150407/821311386.html>

<sup>115</sup> <http://dynamo.kiev.ua/news/208866-aleksej-andronov-a-tsyigan-vse-tot-zhe>

<sup>116</sup> <http://rsport.ru/around/20150604/837121848.html>

Muslim; 3 – anti-Semitic; 1 – anti-Christian. 10% of cases were related to desecration of military memorials and Russophobic graffiti. 15% were related to desecration of Lenin monuments.

- Cases of violence, including murder on racial, ethnic and religious grounds; attacks on antifascists and human rights activists.

During the monitored period, 30 attacks have been recorded, resulting in 31 victims<sup>117</sup>. 77 victims were recorded over the same period in 2014; 99 victims in 2013. 9 victims in 2015 were Jehovah's Witnesses; 8 – LGBT; 3 – Central Asian nationals; 2 – Dagestan nationals; 2 – Muslim priests. When it comes to regional distribution of victims, Moscow traditionally holds the first place with 10 victims. It is followed by St. Petersburg (3), Khabarovsk (2), Murmansk (2), Nizhny Novgorod (2), Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Karelia, Chuvashia, Mordovia, Altai, Tver Region and the Volgograd region (1 each).

- Hate crime murders

During the monitored period, six people were murdered on hate motives – most were Central Asian nationals.

On February 14, nationalists in Moscow region murdered a Ukrainian national Roman Muzichenko, 37<sup>118</sup>.

On February 23, a gay man was murdered in Leningrad region, allegedly for sexual harassment<sup>119</sup>.

On February 26, a 16 year old in Krasnoyarsk murdered a 63 year old man with a knife, allegedly in self-defence<sup>120</sup>.

In February, a Kyrgyzstan national was murdered in St. Petersburg<sup>121</sup>.

On April 12, another Kyrgyzstan man was murdered in St. Petersburg<sup>122</sup>.

On May 3, a 39 year old Tajikistan national was murdered in Korolev<sup>123</sup>.

Comparing these incidents with previous years (2014 – 18 dead; 2013 – 16 dead), we observe a clear decrease in the number of victims of hate crime. This is a result of two factors – law enforcement efforts and the shift of nationalists' focus to Ukraine.

- Nationalist or religious terrorist attacks

No such cases have been recorded during the monitored period.

## **9) Glorification of German National Socialism and collaborators of Nazi Germany, historical revisionism**

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<sup>117</sup> This figure is not final, as in at least one case, we do not know the number of victims.

<sup>118</sup>

<http://www.mk.ru/incident/2015/03/16/nesovershennoletnie-nacionalisty-zabili-ukrainca-do-smerti-vpervye-vstretivshis-v-realnosti.html>

<sup>119</sup>

<http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2015/02/26-30845.htm>

<sup>120</sup>

<http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2015/02/26-30843.htm>

<sup>121</sup>

<http://www.fontanka.ru/2015/04/27/044/>

<sup>122</sup>

<http://www.gazeta.spb.ru/1832290-0/>

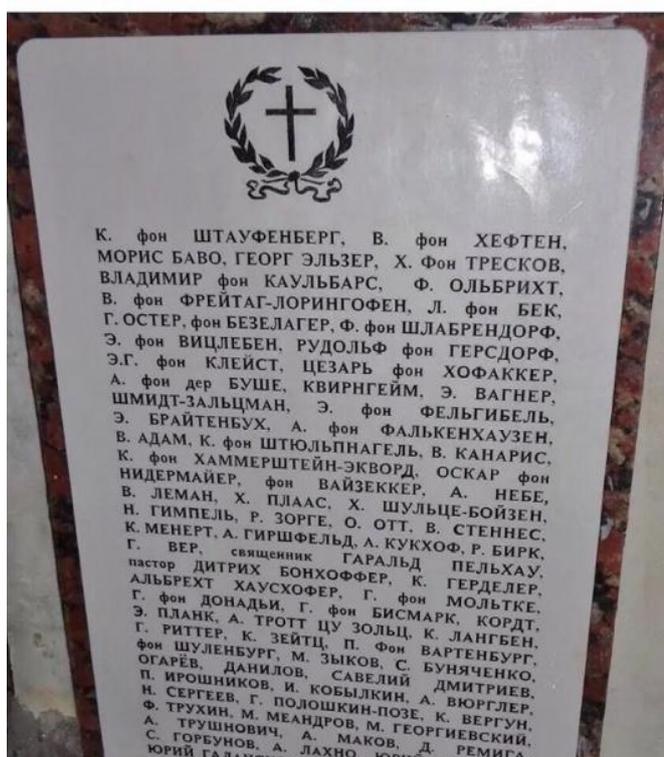
<sup>123</sup>

<http://rus.ozodi.org/content/beheaded-body-tajik-migrant-transferred-dushanbe-/27010037.html>

- Glorification of German National Socialism and/or its collaborators in the media, desecration and vandalism of monuments and memorials to soldiers of the anti-Hitler coalition.

Glorification of Nazism is not present in Russia's public or political life. However, there have been cases related to revision of history in 2015 – particularly regarding the role collaborationists played in Russian and world history.

On April 1, it was reported that Donskoye Cemetery in Moscow has a memorial plaque to “Fighters of Tyranny” - officers of the “Vlasov Army” and SS Gruppenfuehrer Arthur Nebe, party to the death of 46 000 Jews in Belarus (in 1944, he took part in a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler). The monument also included other members of the Hitler assassination plot (July 20, 1944) and several Soviet intelligence officers. The plaque was removed, following controversy<sup>124</sup>.



*Controversial plaque at the Donskoy Cemetery in Moscow*

On April 20, a group of neo-Nazi youth organised a party dedicated to Adolf Hitler's birthday. Police subsequently arrested around 40 people, confiscating weapons and Nazi symbols<sup>125</sup>.

A private Museum of Anti-Bolshevik Resistance in Veshenskaia (Rostovskaya Oblast) was established in 2010. The museum is known for glorifying collaborators who served Adolf Hitler (Cossacks and others).

<sup>124</sup> <http://www.nakanune.ru/news/2015/4/2/22394238/>

<sup>125</sup> <http://ria.ru/incidents/20150421/1060049118.html#ixzz3XyNiBguT>

- Glorification of German National Socialism and/or its collaborators in the decisions\ made by the authorities

No such cases have been recorded in 2014.

- Historical revisionism, Holocaust denial.

There have been significantly more cases of Holocaust denial in the Russian media space. “Holocaust Revisionism” blog (<http://holocaustrevisionism.blogspot.ru/>) published 32 articles in the first half of 2015 (compared to only 19 articles in 2014; 187 in 2013). Meanwhile, “Holocaust Sceptic” blog (<http://holocaustskeptic.blogspot.ru/>) decreased its activity, with only 1 publication during the monitored period.

Leveda Centre survey held on May 22-25 demonstrated extremely marginal support for Holocaust denial in society. Only 6% believed that the Holocaust is grossly exaggerated (12% in 2007), while 74% believe that this was really a genocide (63% in 2007). 8% stated that they never heard of the Holocaust, and 12% preferred not to respond. Interestingly, significantly less people believe in the Armenian genocide (51%; although this figure was even lower in 2007 – 37%)

## 10) Persecution of human rights activists

### *Indicators:*

- Public calls for repressions against human rights activists

Most such calls were made by people who identify themselves as “fighters against Western influence”. On January 30, head of the Synodal Department for Church Public Relations, Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin called on public to pay attention to “expert humanitarian structures, which are branches of American corporations and analytical centres.” According to him, these organisations engage primarily in propaganda of Western democracy and “financial-oligarchic capitalism”<sup>126</sup>.

On May 22, LDPR MP Alexei Didenko proposed to ban foreign NPOs, or “foreign agents”, from reporting and assessing the activity of Russian army and security forces<sup>127</sup>.

On May 25, LDPR MP Vitaly Zolochevsky appealed to the General Prosecution, asking it to assess Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International as a threat to Russia’s constitutional order<sup>128</sup>. Prosecution declined the appeal, as both NGOs are outside Russia’s jurisdiction<sup>129</sup>.

- Restrictions on human rights and anti-fascist organisations.

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<sup>126</sup> <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=57738>

<sup>127</sup> <http://hro.org/node/22265>

<sup>128</sup> <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/news/1694051.html>

<sup>129</sup> <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/news/1694490.html>

This primarily concerns the inclusion of human rights organisations into the list of so-called “foreign agents”. In the first half of 2015, 8 such organisations have been included in the list: Autonomous Non-Profit Human Rights Organization, Youth Centre for Consulting And Training, Committee against Torture, Informational and Educational Centre "Memorial", Voronezh Centre for Media Rights, Novosibirsk Regional Public Foundation, Fund for the Protection of Consumer Rights, Sverdlovsk Regional NGO "Sutyajnik", and Society for the Protection of Consumer Rights. 15 organisations were listed as “foreign agents” in 2014<sup>130</sup>.

Inclusion in this list implies serious difficulties for organisations, including having to provide thorough reports of their activities and assuming the classification of “foreign agent”, which in Russian society bears definite negative connotations. Almost all listed organisations are appealing the decision in courts; three organisations shut down after exhausting their legal defence.

On January 15, office of Memorial Human Rights Centre in Gudermes, Chechnya, was raided by unidentified people, who threw eggs at its workers<sup>131</sup>.

On June 3, office of the Committee Against Torture in Grozny was raided by a crowd. Police officers made no attempt to stop the attackers, and head of the republic said that the attack was provoked by human rights activists themselves<sup>132</sup>.

- Criminal prosecution of human rights activists

Most cases were related to NGOs that refused to register as “foreign agents” and were fined as a result. On February 12, LGBT rights organisation “Rakurs” was fined 300 000 rubles<sup>133</sup>. On March 2, a fine was imposed on a Ekaterinburg human rights centre “Memorial”, which managed to appeal the fine and reduce it to 100 000 rubles on April 13<sup>134</sup>. On March 5, a fine was imposed on an anti-discrimination and anti-homophobia organisation “Maximum”<sup>135</sup>; on March 18 – “For Human Rights” movement<sup>136</sup>; on April 15 – Voronezh Centre for Media Rights<sup>137</sup>.

On May 21, Nizhegorod City Court ruled to fine and deport one of the members of the Danish Institute Against Torture for “violating migration legislation”<sup>138</sup>.

On the other hand, on May 7, administrative case against Civil Control human rights organisation was stopped due to lack of evidence. Ministry of Justice had previously accused the NGO of providing a false report for 2014.<sup>139</sup>

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130 <http://unro.minjust.ru/NKOForeignAgent.aspx>

131 <http://hro.org/node/21108>

132 <http://hro.org/node/22530>

133 <http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2015/03/06-30900.htm>

134 <http://hro.org/node/21946>

135 <http://www.gay.ru/news/rainbow/2015/03/06-30900.htm>

136 <http://hro.org/node/21766>

137 <http://hro.org/node/21974>

138 <http://hro.org/node/22264>

139 <http://hro.org/node/22330>

## Conclusion

Demand for nationalism in Russia is caused by two fundamental factors.

First, Russian society has not yet fully recognised and accepted the relatively recent model of a multinational Russian state, and the government is not taking steps to promote this model to the public through the media.

Second, Russia continues to experience a mass influx of migrants from Ukraine, Central Asia and Caucasus, which is reflected in the demographic, cultural and religious structure of large Russian cities.

It is also worth noting that until recently, Russian radical nationalist groups were considered among the most active and organised, which allowed them to participate in various provocations in order to transform common conflicts into political.

However, 2014 and 2015 saw the level of radical nationalism in Russia dropping significantly. Russian authorities managed to take effective measures in preventing ethnic and religious conflicts (particularly since local authorities started to be held accountable for such incidents). Meanwhile, the conflict in Ukraine also had a positive impact on the level of radical nationalism in Russia.

Annexation of Crimea and armed conflict in eastern regions of Ukraine split nationalists apart – with some supporting Russia's official position and others supporting the opposite point of view. Ukraine was also the breaking point in a relationship between nationalists and the liberal opposition.

Many radicals left Russia for Ukraine, to take part in the armed conflict on either side, which reduced their activity in Russia itself.

All of these factors have weakened the nationalist movement in the country. However, it is safe to assume that nationalist activists will return to Russia after the conflict is over, except now with armed combat experience.

It is likely that attempts will be made to overcome this split among Russian nationalists, in which case the situation will depend on the response of Russian law enforcement and the level of support for the extreme right among the voters, which had decreased significantly in 2014.

Russian authorities undoubtedly take this issue into account and demonstrate political will to combat hate crime and nationalist groups.

Nevertheless, Russian legislative base on protecting minorities needs further development – primarily in terms of anti-discrimination legislation, which the country virtually lacks. There are almost no acts that prevent informal discrimination in the labour employment, housing, education, healthcare, etc. Legislation also lacks the definition of indirect discrimination, victimisation, etc.

Authorities are focusing excessively on punitive measures, whereas preventative practices remain in the background.

Misuse of anti-extremism legislation – when overzealous officials see propaganda of Nazism in places where it does not exist (and prosecuting, for example, sellers of toy soldiers), or when this legislation is used to repress the opposition and minorities – breeds mistrust towards the whole work against hate crime. Discrimination of migrants, particularly in school education, hinders integration efforts and leads to alienation and hostility of migrants, which is exactly what nationalists preach to the public.

Negative media coverage of the LGBT community and “sects” is extremely worrying, as it only increases hostility towards these groups.

Nonetheless, the situation in Russia is favourable towards the authorities that are combatting radical nationalism. The split among nationalists is clear, and the level of radical

nationalist threat in the country has significantly decreased. The government should take advantage of this situation and note the current factors to successfully sustain this trend in the long run.