

# **Russia 2018-2020.**

## **Situation of Minorities, Combating Extremism and Xenophobia.**

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### **Innovations in anti-extremist legislation**

In 2018-2020, a number of regulations were adopted to expand and supplement anti-extremist legislation.

On October 11, 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the law "On the procedure for leaving the Russian Federation and entering the Russian Federation". According to this law entry to Russia was prohibited to the foreigner "participates in the activities of an organization included in the list of organizations and individuals in respect of which there is information about their involvement in extremist activities or terrorism, and if an interagency coordination body performing functions to counter the financing of terrorism has adopted."<sup>1</sup>

On 27 December 2018, two laws were passed to partially decriminalize Article 282 of the Criminal Code (incitement to hatred) by introducing a mechanism of administrative prejudice. The laws introduced a new Article 20.3.1 (incitement of hatred or enmity, as well as humiliation of human dignity) into the Code of Administrative Offences, the disposition of which is almost identical to Part 1 of Article 282 of the Criminal Code, but contains a reservation "if these actions do not contain a criminal offence". The punishment is a fine of up to 20 thousand rubles, up to 100 hours of compulsory work or up to 15 days in jail. Legal entities shall also be liable: they shall be fined up to 250-500 thousand rubles. The limitation period for administrative liability under this article is one year. The first part of Art. 282 of the Criminal Code is introduced with a clause stating that liability under this article occurs after "bringing to administrative responsibility for a similar act within one year."<sup>2</sup>

On March 18, 2019, V. Putin signed the law "On Amendments to Articles 7 and 7.1 of the Federal Law 'On Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism' and Articles 7 and 10 of the Federal Law 'On the National Payment System,'" implying that attorneys, notaries and entrepreneurs providing legal and accounting services will be required to freeze client funds or other property if the client is on the Rosfinmonitoring (special control Agency) list<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup><http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201810110030>

<sup>2</sup><http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201812270078>,  
<http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201812280002>

<sup>3</sup><http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201903180033>

On July 26, 2019, a law was passed ratifying the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Convention on Countering Extremism. The convention defines such concepts and terms as "extremism", "extremist act", "financing of extremism", "extremist materials", "extremist organization", "countering extremism". It also establishes the basic principles of cooperation in the field of countering extremism and proposes a list of measures developed and implemented at the national level.<sup>4</sup>

On October 1, 2019, Federal Law No. 451-FZ of November 28, 2018 "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation" came into force, according to which cases on recognizing materials as extremist and on recognizing information contained on the Internet prohibited for distribution in Russia were transferred from civil proceedings to administrative proceedings<sup>5</sup>.

On December 2, 2019, President Vladimir Putin signed the law "On Amendments to Article 6 of the Federal Law 'On Commemoration of the Victory of the Soviet People in the Great Patriotic War of 1941 - 1945' and Article 1 of the Federal Law 'On Countering Extremist Activity,'" which replaces the ban on "propaganda and public display" of Nazi symbols and attributes and symbols of extremist organizations with a ban on its "use." An exception is situations "in which a negative attitude to the ideology of Nazism and extremism is formed and there are no signs of propaganda or justification of Nazi and extremist ideology."<sup>6</sup>

On December 2, 2019, a law was passed to expand the list of persons who are prohibited from being founders, participants, and members of nonprofit organizations, including public and religious associations. In accordance with it, the federal laws "On Public Associations," "On Non-Profit Organizations," and "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" were amended to prohibit organizations and individuals whose accounts were frozen by the Interagency Commission on Countering Terrorist Financing from becoming founders as well as members or participants of non-profit organizations. When applied to religious organizations, even the restriction on participation can be seen as an infringement of the right to freedom of conscience, since people are effectively denied membership in religious communities.

On 27 April 2020, the President of Russia signed a law amending the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes of the Russian Federation. The Criminal Code was supplemented with Article 243.4 (destruction or damage of military graves, as well as monuments, steles, obelisks, other memorial structures or objects commemorating those killed in the defense of the Fatherland or its interests or dedicated to the days of military glory of Russia). According to part 1 of this article for such actions committed "with the purpose of causing damage to historical and cultural significance of such facilities," the punishment was a fine of up to 3 million rubles or the salary for up to three years, or forced labor for up to three years, or

<sup>4</sup>Russian News Agency//<https://ria.ru/20190726/1556916117.html>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.garant.ru/news/1296745/>

<sup>6</sup><https://rg.ru/2019/12/02/v-rf-sniali-zapret-na-demonstraciiu-simvoliki-nacizma-v-nauke-i-kulture.html>

incarceration for the same period. Moreover, the question was about the facilities located both in Russia and outside of it.<sup>7</sup>

On May 23, 2020 the law "On introducing amendments to some legislative acts of the Russian Federation (in terms of improving the legislation on elections and referendums and providing basic guarantees of electoral rights and the right to participate in a referendum of citizens of the Russian Federation)" was passed that prohibited those convicted under "extremist" and "terrorist" articles of the Criminal Code to elect to representative bodies of municipal formations and legislative bodies within five years after removal or clearing of their criminal record<sup>8</sup>. The problem, however, is that because of the use of certain articles of the Criminal Code to fight the opposition, these restrictions are perceived as another attempt to limit the ability of opposition candidates to be elected.

On May 29, 2020 Russian President Vladimir Putin approved a new version of the Strategy to Counter Extremism until 2025. The concept of "ideology of violence" was introduced into the Strategy defined as a set of views and ideas justifying the use of violence to achieve political, ideological, religious and other goals.

The definition of "manifestations of extremism" was also extended to acts threatening the constitutional order and violation of the territorial integrity of Russia. The definition of "manifestations of extremism" was expanded to include activities to minimize and eliminate the consequences of extremism.

The new version of the Strategy provides a new description of external and internal extremist threats. External threats are now considered to be "the support and encouragement by a number of states of destructive activities carried out by foreign or international non-governmental organizations aimed at destabilizing the socio-political and socio-economic situation in the Russian Federation, violating the unity and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, including the instigation of color revolutions, the destruction of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, as well as assistance to the activities of international extremist organizations.

The internal threats in the Strategy include attempts to carry out extremist activities by nationalist, radical public, religious, ethnic and other organizations and individuals, the spread of violent ideology, the inclination, recruitment or other involvement of Russian citizens and foreigners in the country in extremist communities and other illegal activities, and the formation of closed ethnic and religious enclaves, as well as due to historical and socio-economic factors

The new Strategy mentions as a potential source of threats the hotbeds of terrorism in the Middle East, the creation of clandestine cells of extremist and terrorist organizations (including through remote recruitment), the danger of radicalization of migrant workers, the

<sup>7</sup><https://www.mskagency.ru/materials/2991367>

<sup>8</sup>[http://www.rapsinews.ru/legislation\\_news/20200520/305822382.html](http://www.rapsinews.ru/legislation_news/20200520/305822382.html)

"information and psychological impact" of foreign special services to "erode traditional Russian spiritual and moral values and destabilize the internal political and social situation in the country" through "destructive activities" by NGOs "disguised as humanitarian, Sports schools and clubs are also mentioned as hotbeds of radicalization of youth.

In the directions of state policy to counter extremism "improvement of mechanisms to counteract destructive activities of foreign or international non-governmental organizations," the fight against "instigation of 'color revolutions,'" the prevention of all forms of discrimination and the formation of an atmosphere of intolerance to xenophobia in society were added. In the sphere of migration policy proposed to develop programs for the adaptation of migrants; to counteract the emergence of spatial segregation, the formation of ethnic enclaves, the social exclusion of certain groups of citizens; to involve civil society institutions and comprehensive public information about migration processes and to counteract false information about them that causes hatred and hostility.

According to the new version of the Strategy, the educational process should form in children "an all-Russian civil identity, patriotism, civic responsibility, a sense of pride in Russian history," as well as foster a culture of inter-ethnic and inter-religious communication.

A list of directions of anti-extremist policy related to civil society was included in the Strategy: state support to civil society institutions fighting extremism, including veteran and youth organizations, work with socially oriented non-profit organizations, participation of public councils in activities for harmonization of interethnic and interreligious relations; assistance to mass media "in broad and objective coverage" of activity of subjects of counteraction to extremism.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to the previous version of the Strategy, the new version introduces target indicators: the dynamics of the number of registered crimes, administrative offenses and identified perpetrators by year; the share of violent crimes in the total number of extremist crimes by year; the number of public and religious associations and organizations recognized as extremist; the number of Internet resources with extremist materials that have been blocked and from which these materials have been removed xml-ph-00

On July 31, 2020, amendments to the law "On Combating Extremist Activity" were adopted. According to them, the wording included in the definition of extremism "violent change of the foundations of the constitutional order and violation of the integrity of the Russian Federation" is replaced by "violent change of the foundations of the constitutional order and (or) violation of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation (including alienation of part of the Russian Federation territory) except for delimitation, demarcation, re-demarcation of the state border of the Russian Federation with neighboring states"<sup>10</sup>. Such an interpretation, in principle, allows a State to negotiate border changes with other states.

<sup>9</sup><http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202005290036?index=0&rangeSize=1>

<sup>10</sup><http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202007310069?index=1&rangeSize=1>

## Migration law

On June 8, 2020 amendments were adopted to the law "On Migration Registration of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Russian Federation," which expanded the list of foreigners who can act as an inviting party when accepting a migrant - previously these were qualified specialists, but now - any people who own residential premises and are ready to provide them to a migrant for housing, allowed to register and deregister via MFC (multifunctional centers of state services) or via the "State Services" portal.<sup>11</sup>

There is only one example of discriminatory legislation against migrants - and it was probably intended to calm local passions. On March 27, 2019, the head of Yakutia (Russian area), Aysen Nikolayev, signed a decree banning the employment of migrants in the region. The ban did not apply to representatives of states that are members of the Eurasian Economic Union (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan). According to this decree, migrants could not obtain patents for 33 types of economic activity. Among other things, they were prohibited from wholesale and retail trade, auto repair, construction, courier deliveries, as well as work as public transportation drivers, cab drivers, cafe and restaurant employees, activities in law, accounting, architecture and engineering design, research and development, and other professional scientific and technical activities. Businesses were given three months to bring the number of foreign workers in accordance with the ban<sup>12</sup>. However, judging by the fact that no scandals or mass exodus of migrants from Yakutia followed, it mostly remained on paper.

## Xenophobic Attacks and Xenophobic Vandalism

If we talk about xenophobic attacks, in 2018 the monitoring recorded 6 deaths and 29 victims, in 2019 - 6 deaths and 58 victims, in 2020 (in 11 months) 1 deaths and 25 victims. Despite the fact that every such attack is a tragedy, we can state that the number of attacks is still at a low level compared to the second half of the 2000s, when the number of deaths sometimes exceeded a hundred people a year, and the number of victims was in the hundreds.<sup>13</sup>

The main centers where such crimes were committed remain the two largest cities of the country - Moscow (and the Moscow Region, which in fact represents a single region with it) and St. Petersburg (and the Leningrad Region). Thus. In 2018, Moscow accounted for 5 deaths and 15 victims, St. Petersburg for 1 death and 6 victims, in 2019 for 3 deaths and 19 victims and 1 death and 13 victims respectively, and in 2020 for 5 and 11 victims. Another notable trend in recent years is an increase in the number of attacks on LGBT people, likely caused by the perception that the authorities will not be particularly zealous in prosecuting attackers (see below), and, consequently, the proportion of LGBT people among victims of attacks. In 2018, LGBT people included (or were accepted by LGBT people or suffered because they tried

<sup>11</sup><https://rg.ru/2020/06/11/inostranzi-dok.html>

<sup>12</sup><https://takiedela.ru/2019/04/narod-spit-kak-medved/>,

<https://glava.sakha.gov.ru/uploads/ckfinder/userfiles/files/442.pdf>, <https://zona.media/news/2019/03/20/yakutsk>, <https://sakhalive.ru/nakipelo-v-yakutske-mnogotyisyachnyiy-narod-ne-pomeshhaetsya-v-triumfe-na-antimigrantskoe-sobranie/>, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BvJa6ASINqI/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://pravorf.org/index.php/smi-review/204-mbhr-short-review-2009>

to protect them) one death and four victims (approximately 8% of all victims), in 2019 three deaths and 13 victims (i.e. a quarter of all victims), and in 2020 11 victims (i.e. 40% of victims)<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup>[https://rus.azattyk.org/a/kyrgyzstan\\_russia\\_migrants\\_skinheads/28991024.html](https://rus.azattyk.org/a/kyrgyzstan_russia_migrants_skinheads/28991024.html), <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2018/01/d43223/>, <https://www.spb.kp.ru/daily/26813.7/3849215/>, [https://www.gazeta.ru/auto/2018/02/22\\_a\\_11659909.shtml?updated](https://www.gazeta.ru/auto/2018/02/22_a_11659909.shtml?updated), <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2018/03/d43227/>, <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2018/04/d43228/>, <https://ovdinfo.org/express-news/2018/01/20/na-aktivista-levogo-bloka-posle-antifashistskogo-marsha-napali/>, <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2018/12/d43225/>, <https://www.mskagency.ru/materials/2772210>, <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2018/04/d43237/>, <https://ren.tv/news/kriminal/308653-kamery-nabliudeniia-zafikirovali-zhestokuiu-ponozhovshchinu-na-severe-moskvy>, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/29603020.html>, <https://ovdinfo.org/express-news/2018/09/08/v-moskve-aktivisty-dvizheniya-serb-napali-na-dezhurnyh-ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2018/06/d39602/>, <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/324458/>, <https://www.znak.com/2018-09-04/policiya-ekaterinburga-ichet-muzhchinu-kotoryy-izbil-devushku-vozle-gey-kluba>, <https://72.xn-b1aew.xn--p1ai/news/item/14311258/>, <https://www.mkkluga.ru/incident/2018/12/10/gitarista-izvestnoy-pank-gruppy-izbili-posle-koncerta-v-obninske.html>, <https://www.interfax.ru/moscow/651184>, <https://kursk-izvestia.ru/news/78796/>, <https://myslo.ru/news/criminal/2019-04-30-rasprava-nad-zhenshinoj-kassiom-v-uzlovoj-ubijca-izmyvals-nad-sosedkoj-pochti-god>, <https://zona.media/news/2020/09/07/vokzal>, <https://www.mk.ru/incident/2019/08/05/troe-podrostkov-nacionalistov-zaderzhany-za-ubiystvo-gastarbaytera-v-moskve.html>, [https://refugee.ru/istorii/napadenie-v-magnite-prodavets-supermarketa-izbila-akushera-ginekologa-iz-tadzhikistana/?utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=sbor-sredstv-dlya-zhertvy-napadeniya-na-poch,,](https://refugee.ru/istorii/napadenie-v-magnite-prodavets-supermarketa-izbila-akushera-ginekologa-iz-tadzhikistana/?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=sbor-sredstv-dlya-zhertvy-napadeniya-na-poch,,), <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2019/04/d43231/>, <http://www.pojarnayabezopasnost.ru/articles/%D0%B2-%D0%BC%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B2%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%B5-%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B3%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BF%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BB%D0%B3%D0%B1%D1%82-%D0%B0.html>, <https://tass.ru/proisshestiya/6757759>, <https://takiedela.ru/news/2019/08/23/kazki-napali-na-bezdomnykh/>, <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2019/08/d43226/>, <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2019/08/d43238/>, <https://www.mk.ru/incident/2019/09/05/muzhchinu-zabivshego-do-polusmert-i-dvornika-s-kinzhalom-ulichili-v-nacionalizme.html>, <https://paperpaper.ru/papernews/2019/12/10/na-ligovskom-semero-muzhchin-izbili-18-let/>, <https://konkretno.ru/kriminal/114940-v-kudrovo-izbili-afrikanca.html>, <https://zona.media/news/2019/06/21/spb>, <https://www.fontanka.ru/2019/04/23/023/>, <https://theins.ru/news/157226>, <https://78.ru/news/2019-09-17/v-peterburge-troe-skinhedov-s-nacistskimi-tatuirovkami-s-nozhom-napali-na-migranta>, <https://www.fontanka.ru/2020/01/30/027/>, [https://akhbor-rus.com/-p3157-103.htm?fbclid=IwAR1m\\_9VXvhs9asqve6\\_0Qf9qtezqDra7jMkw6kjuqtlIyZpBD6lvhwB4M](https://akhbor-rus.com/-p3157-103.htm?fbclid=IwAR1m_9VXvhs9asqve6_0Qf9qtezqDra7jMkw6kjuqtlIyZpBD6lvhwB4M), [http://sovetsky.riz.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=press\\_dep&op=1&did=774](http://sovetsky.riz.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=press_dep&op=1&did=774), <https://paperpaper.ru/papernews/2019/12/10/na-ligovskom-semero-muzhchin-izbili-18-let/>, <https://www.ap22.ru/paper/Barnaulets-pobil-zhitelya-Kavkaza-pryamo-v-magazine-a-zatem-izvinilsya-v-sude.html>, <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27072/4142355/>, <https://omsk.sledcom.ru/news/item/1409450/>, <https://news.ru/incidents/lgbt-aktivista-izbili-za-piket-v-podderzhku-chechenskih-geev/>, <https://www.newsvl.ru/accidents/2019/04/19/179973/>, <https://cherinfo.ru/news/100894-v-severnom-rajone-cerepovca-neizvestnye-zestoko-izbili-bezdomnuu-zensinu>, [https://v1.ru/text/gorod/66123169/?from=a\\_recommendation](https://v1.ru/text/gorod/66123169/?from=a_recommendation), <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2019/06/d41178/>, [https://161.ru/text/gorod/66tv.ru/news/290096/muzcina-izbil-celuusihsa-geev-vpodezde-doma-vmoskve/?fbclid=IwAR0Gj3BStIkng2Nr8Hh7BtUk5qKPE4w4Zmb0zdfDciuo\\_wX-ijgaLhtztgQ](https://161.ru/text/gorod/66tv.ru/news/290096/muzcina-izbil-celuusihsa-geev-vpodezde-doma-vmoskve/?fbclid=IwAR0Gj3BStIkng2Nr8Hh7BtUk5qKPE4w4Zmb0zdfDciuo_wX-ijgaLhtztgQ), <https://esquire.ru/articles/202573-tiktok-blogera-yanu-leonovu-izbili-iz-za-nepriстойnyh-video-v-napadenii-priznalos-muzhskoe-gosudarstvo/>, <https://zelenograd24.ru/pressroom/incidents/detail/344316/>, <https://www.fontanka.ru/2020/07/17/69372037/>, <https://konkretno.ru/kriminal/125031-shkolnik-vystrelil-v-golovu-migrantu-v-polezhaevskom-parke.html>, <https://meduza.io/feature/2019/07/26/v-peterburge-ubili-lgbt-aktivistku-kotoraya-ranshe-hodila-na-russkie-marshi-ey-polgoda-ugrozhali-gomofoby>, <https://zona.media/news/2020/08/06/spb>, <https://twitter.com/sirotanareive/status/1297233802251702274>, <https://www.fontanka.ru/2020/10/01/69488791/>, <https://konkretno.ru/kriminal/131763-treh-podrostkov-podozrevajut-v-izbienii-i-grabezhe-migrantov.html>, <https://meduza.io/feature/2020/11/15/v-peterburge-zaveli-delo-na-podrostkov-napadavshih-na-migrantov-fontanka-pishet-cto-oni-izbivali-dvor>

As for xenophobically motivated acts of vandalism, their number also remains small and is gradually decreasing. In 2018 there were 36 such acts, in 2019 - 31, in 2020 (in 11 months) - 24. Moreover, unlike the situation with xenophobic attacks, acts of vandalism are not concentrated in Moscow and St. Petersburg - in 2018 they were noted in 25 regions, in 2019 - in 23 regions, in 2020 - in 12 regions (this very year St. Petersburg became the place of concentration of such incidents - seven were noted there). Anti-Semitic incidents take a significant place among these (9 in 2018, 8 in 2019 and 4 in 2020). The second highest number of attacks were incidents against Orthodox churches, crosses, etc. (9 in 2018, 4 in 2019. In 2020, anti-Orthodox incidents were at the top of the list, with six incidents.

As for anti-Muslim vandalism, there was one incident each in 2018 and 2019, and two incidents in 2020. One incident each in all three years occurred at Protestant and Buddhist sites. In 2019 there was one anti-Chinese incident, one anti-Catholic incident, one incident targeting Crimean Tatars, and in 2020 there was one incident targeting pagans. Two incidents of anti-Caucasian vandalism were also reported in 2018, and another such incident was reported in 2020. Two incidents targeting Jehovah's Witnesses were reported in 2019. The direction of the remaining acts of vandalism cannot be ascertained<sup>15</sup>.

15<https://www.facebook.com/ilya.raskin.16/posts/154717804205622>, <https://mr-7.ru/articles/174689/>, <https://www.city-n.ru/view/407982.html>, <https://prokuror-eao.ru/po-faktu-izobrazheniya-natsistskoj-svastiki-na-fasade-zhilogo-doma-prokuraturoj-goroda-birobidzhana-prinyaty-mery-reagirovaniya>, <https://stmegi.com/posts/61786/v-istoricheskoy-rezidentsii-glav-khabada-poyavilis-antisemitskie-graffiti/>, <https://v102.ru/news/91897.html>, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3991751/>, <https://29.xn-b1aew.xn--p1ai/news/item/12422120/>, <https://qha.com.ua/ru/proisshestiya/na-gore-chatirdag-v-okkupirovannom-krimu-spilili-pravoslavnii-krest/190404/>, <https://62.xn-b1aew.xn--p1ai/news/item/12915050/>, <https://www.newsru.com/religy/13aug2018/karel.html>, <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=70978>, <http://stv24.tv/novosti/vandaly-izurodovali-chyornoj-svastikoj-poklonnyj-krest-na-meste-drevnejshogo-stavropolskom-krae-xrama/>, <https://66.ru/news/society/216456/>, <https://xn-b1aew.xn--p1ai/news/item/14906161>, <http://rk.karelia.ru/accident/vandaly-razgromili-tserkov/>, [https://www.elkras.ru/arhiv/arhiv\\_novostei/2018god/dekabr/incidentsmagazinomslovo.idx?fbclid=IwAR0mmE0hAGByDSWg9Xeluc9TQHIIH2hCVXibRzz0gFKBJWCqHjJRNMOctc3Q](https://www.elkras.ru/arhiv/arhiv_novostei/2018god/dekabr/incidentsmagazinomslovo.idx?fbclid=IwAR0mmE0hAGByDSWg9Xeluc9TQHIIH2hCVXibRzz0gFKBJWCqHjJRNMOctc3Q), <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=70055>, <https://fedpress.ru/news/86/society/2175203>, <https://www.chita.ru/news/100972/>, [https://www.yarnews.net/news/show/yaroslavl/41327/v\\_yaroslavle\\_vandaly\\_narisovali\\_svastiku\\_na\\_memoriale\\_30-letiyu\\_pobedy.htm](https://www.yarnews.net/news/show/yaroslavl/41327/v_yaroslavle_vandaly_narisovali_svastiku_na_memoriale_30-letiyu_pobedy.htm), <https://bloknot-stavropol.ru/news/vandaly-isportili-pamyatnik-revoljutsionerki-kseni-1007322>, <https://spbdnevnik.ru/news/2018-12-21/v-kolpino-risovali-svastiki-na-obeliske-pamyati-zhertv-kontslagerey-neskolko-nedel-podryad>, <https://kurgan.sledcom.ru/news/item/1220837/>, [http://www.ruffnews.ru/novoherkassk/V-Novoherkasske-huligan-risuyuschiy-rasistskie-nadpisi-na-stenah-popal-na-video\\_39830](http://www.ruffnews.ru/novoherkassk/V-Novoherkasske-huligan-risuyuschiy-rasistskie-nadpisi-na-stenah-popal-na-video_39830), [https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/web/proc\\_59news/2018/03/27/14460/](https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/web/proc_59news/2018/03/27/14460/), [http://poleznaya.dp.ua/?id=5444&doc=novomoskovtsy\\_vozmushcheny\\_natsistkoi\\_svastike\\_na\\_zabore\\_otremontirovannoi\\_shkoly](http://poleznaya.dp.ua/?id=5444&doc=novomoskovtsy_vozmushcheny_natsistkoi_svastike_na_zabore_otremontirovannoi_shkoly), <https://www.orinfo.ru/121426/arest-na-8-sutok-za-fashistskuyu-simvoliku>, <http://time56.ru/news/lenta-novostey/v-parke-v-poselke-novosergievka-neizvestnye-nariso/>, [https://www.rzn.info/news/2018/8/29/prokuratura-obyzala-upravlyayuschuyu-kompaniyu-doma-na-mo-ru/pod-astraxanyu-vandaly-razgromili-musulmanskie-mogily/?utm\\_source=yxnews&utm\\_medium=desktop](https://www.rzn.info/news/2018/8/29/prokuratura-obyzala-upravlyayuschuyu-kompaniyu-doma-na-mo-ru/pod-astraxanyu-vandaly-razgromili-musulmanskie-mogily/?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop), [https://www.interfax.ru/moscow/646063?utm\\_source=yxnews&utm\\_medium=desktop](https://www.interfax.ru/moscow/646063?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop), <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=72223>, <https://prichod.ru/opyt-prihodov/34085/>, <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=73443>, <https://tass.ru/proisshestiya/6557700>, <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=73709>, [https://www.sibreal.org/a/30365724.html?fbclid=IwAR1bXFh3B-uwXK1qYiMqjDFC1e\\_ccyBB3uLFhHR6nyo64JXElyQldhkB2s](https://www.sibreal.org/a/30365724.html?fbclid=IwAR1bXFh3B-uwXK1qYiMqjDFC1e_ccyBB3uLFhHR6nyo64JXElyQldhkB2s), <https://fedpress.ru/news/86/society/2175203>, <https://www.bankfax.ru/news/131801/>, <https://novayagazeta.ru/news/2019/05/10/151548-v-sevastopole-vozbudili-delo-o-vandalizme-posle-povrezhdeniya-memoriala-uchastnikam-velikoy-otechestvennoy-voyny>, [https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/web/proc\\_74](https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/web/proc_74), <https://www.newsvl.ru/accidents/2019/02/14/178104/>, <https://prokuror-kaluga.ru/prokuratura-tarusskogo-rajona-vyyavila-narusheniya-v-sfere-ispolneniya-zakonodatelstva-o-protivodejstvii-ekstremistskoj-deyatelnosti.html>, <http://ulproc.ru/node/45861>, <https://www.province.ru/samara/bdi/v-samare-za-risunok-na-dome-privlekli-k-otvetstvennosti-dolznostnykh-lits.html>, <https://newstracker.ru/news/incident/29-04-2019/v-pashu-vandaly>

The decrease in attacks and vandalism in 2020 was largely the result of the coronavirus epidemic and the resulting travel restrictions.

## Enforcement practice

According to the Judicial Department of the Supreme Court in 2018, there was an upward trend in the number of people convicted under "anti-extremist" articles of the Criminal Code (Art 282, 280, 280.1, 205.2, 354.1, parts 1 and 2 148, 282.1, 282.2, 205.4, 205.5), continuing the policy of previous years (for example, in 2016 there were 662 people convicted, in 2017 - 786<sup>16</sup>). A total of 731 people were convicted in 2018; in the second half of the year, the rate of convictions slowed somewhat due to the beginning of discussions about the decriminalization of Article 282 of the Criminal Code ("incitement to hatred"), under which people were mostly convicted - in 2018, 518 people were convicted under it<sup>17</sup>.

Decriminalization of Art. 282 of the Criminal Code at the end of 2018 led to a sharp decrease in the number of convictions in 2019 - 432 people were convicted. At the same time, Article 280 of the Criminal Code (Public calls for extremist activities) (145 people were convicted under it) and Article 205.2 of the Criminal Code (Public calls for terrorist activities, public justification of terrorism or propaganda of terrorism) (126 people were convicted under it) acted as "substitutes" for Article 282 (only 36 people were convicted of it in 2019). The Prosecutor General's Office also confirmed the decrease in the number of convictions. According to its data, the decriminalization of Art. 282 led to the fact that the number of people prosecuted for extremist crimes in 2019 halved - from 1265 to 585. On the other hand, 383 people were convicted in 2019 under Article 20.3.1 of the Administrative Code of the Russian Federation ("Inciting hatred or enmity, as well as humiliation of human dignity"), which replaced Article 282 of the Criminal Code<sup>18</sup>.

narisovali-svastiku-na-v-ezde-v-georgievsk, <https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/b6fea1cb>,  
[https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/web/proc\\_16](https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/web/proc_16),  
[https://dimzakon.ucoz.ru/news/prokuraturoj\\_goroda\\_prinjaty\\_mery\\_po\\_vyjavleniju\\_fashistskoj\\_simvoliki/2019-05-24-1607](https://dimzakon.ucoz.ru/news/prokuraturoj_goroda_prinjaty_mery_po_vyjavleniju_fashistskoj_simvoliki/2019-05-24-1607), <http://ulproc.ru/node/43083>,  
[http://kurganproc.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=11528:v-prokurature-kurganskoj-oblasti-utverzhdeno-obvinitelnoe-zaklyuchenie-po-ugolovnomu-delu-votnoshenii-zhitelya-oblastnogo-tsentra-kotoryj-prizyval-ekstremistskoj-deyatelnost&catid=38&Itemid=101](http://kurganproc.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11528:v-prokurature-kurganskoj-oblasti-utverzhdeno-obvinitelnoe-zaklyuchenie-po-ugolovnomu-delu-votnoshenii-zhitelya-oblastnogo-tsentra-kotoryj-prizyval-ekstremistskoj-deyatelnost&catid=38&Itemid=101), <https://29.ru/text/incidents/69087691/>,  
<https://zona.media/news/2020/07/29/ferma>, <https://lechaim.ru/news/napadeniya-antisemita-na-evrejskuyu-obshinu-na-vostoke-moskvy/>, <https://ura.news/news/1052433594>, <https://realnoevremya.ru/news/178418-v-elektrogorske-vandaly-povredili-musulmanskiy-centr>, <https://www.fontanka.ru/2020/04/08/69079270/>,  
[https://vk.com/wall65162828\\_9921](https://vk.com/wall65162828_9921), [https://lenta.ru/news/2020/01/27/boga\\_net/](https://lenta.ru/news/2020/01/27/boga_net/), <https://moe-online.ru/news/city/1059947>, <https://www.fontanka.ru/2020/04/08/69077932/>,  
<https://tvk6.ru/publications/news/49585/>, [https://78.ru/news/2020-02-01/podzhog\\_hrama\\_apostola\\_petra\\_v\\_veslom\\_poslke\\_popal\\_na\\_video](https://78.ru/news/2020-02-01/podzhog_hrama_apostola_petra_v_veslom_poslke_popal_na_video),  
<https://ufa.mk.ru/incident/2020/11/05/posle-prizyva-obshhestvennoy-aktivistki-neizvestnye-podozhgli-krest-v-beloreckom-rayone.htm>, <https://vecherka.su/articles/news/160866/>, [https://vladnews.ru/2020-06-02/172868/vladivostoke\\_policija](https://vladnews.ru/2020-06-02/172868/vladivostoke_policija), <https://35.xn-b1aew.xn--p1ai/news/item/20943320/>,  
<https://komiinform.ru/news/195794>, [http://lench.chel.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=press\\_dep&op=1&did=380](http://lench.chel.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=press_dep&op=1&did=380),  
<https://nevnov.ru/810640-v-peterburge-avtory-ekstremistskikh-graffiti-otvetyat-za-vandalizm-v-s>  
<sup>16</sup><http://www.cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=3834>, <http://www.cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=4572>  
<sup>17</sup><http://www.cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=4894>  
<sup>18</sup><http://www.cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=5259>, <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/8002335>

According to the Judicial Department of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, in the first six months of 2020 220 people were convicted under "anti-extremist" articles. The largest number of convictions was under Article 280 and 205.2 of the Criminal Code - 80 and 73, respectively. In addition, 347 people were convicted under Article 20.3.1 of the CAO in the first half of 2020 - almost as many as in the whole of 2019<sup>19</sup>. If this rate continues, the number of convictions will rise again to 2017-2018 levels.

In addition, there are also large-scale convictions under the anti-extremist articles of the CAO, where the number of convictions exceeds the number of convictions under the articles of the Criminal Code by several times. Under Article 20.3 of the CAO "Demonstration of Nazi symbols and symbols of prohibited organizations") for 2018 1,652 people or legal entities were convicted, for 2019 - 2,388, and in the first six months of 2020 - 1,052. Under Article 20.29 of the CAO "Dissemination of extremist materials", 1964 people were convicted in 2018, 1,591 in 2019, and 856 in the first six months of 2020<sup>20</sup>.

According to data collected through open-source monitoring, 579 persons were convicted in 2018, 194 in 2019, and 132 during the first 11 months of 2020. A significant portion of those convicted received non-custodial sentences - conditional imprisonment, fines, restriction of freedom, correctional labor - 416 in 2018, 94 in 2019, and 75 in 2020. Custodial sentences were imposed on 161 people in 2018, 98 in 2019, and 57 in 2020. Meanwhile, 77 people in 2018, 51 people in 2019, and 24 people in 2020 were sentenced to relatively short prison terms (up to 5 years), 30, 11, and 8 people were sentenced to prison terms of 5 to 10 years, 5, 30, and 14 people were sentenced to prison terms of 10 to 15 years, 35 people in 2018 and 10 people in 2020 were sentenced to prison terms of 15 to 20 years, and 1, 4, and 1 people were sentenced to prison terms of over 20 years respectively. Five people in 2018 and 2 people in 2019 were sentenced to involuntary treatment. The sentences for eight people in 2018 and two people in 2019 are unknown.

Also, according to the General Prosecutor's Office, in 2019 more than 81,000 Internet resources with information containing terrorist and extremist threats, including calls for mass unrest and violence, were blocked. Illegal information was removed from 45,000 sites<sup>21</sup>. According to Roskomnadzor, more than 17,000 materials with ISIS propaganda were blocked in 2018, more than 20700 in 2019; Hizb ut-Tahrir was blocked in 2018, more than 14700 in 2019; In 2018 almost 5,000 materials of Right Sector, UNA-UNSO, UPA, Stepan Bandera Trident, Brotherhood, Azov battalion were blocked, in 2019 - already more than 12100.<sup>22</sup>

There is a Federal List of Extremist Materials to combat extremist literature and Internet materials. In 2018 it increased by 365 items, in 2019 - by 194 items, in 10 months of 2020 - by 115 items, reaching 5119 items<sup>23</sup>. Extremist organizations are listed on the Federal List of

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=5460>

<sup>20</sup><http://www.cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=4759>, <http://www.cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=5259>, <http://www.cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=5460>

<sup>21</sup><https://tass.ru/obschestvo/8002335>

<sup>22</sup><http://www.rkn.gov.ru/plan-and-reports/reports/p449/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/extremist-materials/>

Extremist Organizations. Currently, 79 organizations are included there (in 2018 there were 7, in 2019 - 4, in 2020 - 5)<sup>24</sup>.

It can also be noted that local officials have learned how to deal with domestic conflicts that arise on the ground, spilling over into interethnic conflicts with the active participation of radical nationalists who came there (the so-called Kondopoga technology) - all four such conflicts that broke out in 2018-2019 were promptly extinguished.

According to the Judicial Department at the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation under Art. 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation (violation of legislation on freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and religious associations) in 2018, 250 persons were punished - 172 individuals and 78 legal entities, in 2019 - 223 persons: 131 individuals, 82 legal entities, 10 officials. The total amount of fines under the effective regulations in this area amounted to 3,736,500 rubles in 2018, and 3,337,100 rubles in 2019. In the first half of 2020, according to Art. 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation, 132 persons were punished, including 90 individuals, 39 legal entities and three officials.

The total amount of fines under the decrees that entered into force for the first half of 2020 amounted to 1,581,000 rubles.<sup>25</sup> In this case, we are talking about a violation of the Law on Missionary Work (more precisely, Federal Law No. 374 of July 6, 2016 "On Amending the Federal Law "On Countering Terrorism" and certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation in terms of establishing additional measures to counter terrorism and ensure public security", which introduced article 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Offenses) imposes a number of restrictions on the activities of religious organizations: a closed list of places where missionary activity is allowed is established, a ban on missionary activity in residential premises (except for religious rites and worship services) is introduced, missionaries are required to have a package of documents when conducting missionary activity confirming their authority. A restriction is introduced on the participation of foreigners who entered Russia at the invitation of a religious organization in missionary activities on behalf of other religious organizations.<sup>26</sup> Despite the fact that there is no clear concept of "missionary activity" in the law, theoretically even believers who tell their neighbors about their religion can be held accountable for it.

A number of resolutions clarifying unclear places in the "anti-missionary" legislation were issued by the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court.

On March 13, 2018, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation issued a ruling, according to which a sign of the missionary activity of a religious association is "dissemination by citizens, their associations of information about a specific religious doctrine among persons who, not being its followers, are involved in their number", and the missionary activity itself "carried out by a special circle of persons (a religious association, its members, other citizens and legal entities in the prescribed manner). Thus, the fact of carrying out

<sup>24</sup> <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7822/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=4891>, <http://cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=5258>,  
<http://cdep.ru/index.php?id=79&item=5461>

<sup>26</sup> [http://asozd2.duma.gov.ru/main.nsf/\(SpravkaNew\)?OpenAgent&RN=1039149-6&02](http://asozd2.duma.gov.ru/main.nsf/(SpravkaNew)?OpenAgent&RN=1039149-6&02)

missionary activity can be considered proven only if all these signs are present in the activity of a religious association.

According to the Forum 18 service, during 2019 and the first half of 2020, liability under parts 4 and 5 of Art. 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation, 17 religious organizations and 125 believers were involved (some of them in several episodes). At the same time, in 2020, the number of Muslims exceeded the number of Protestants, who were previously the main victims of persecution under this article.

In 2019, 100 people were convicted - 42 Muslims, 17 Baptists, 16 Evangelical Christians, 8 Hare Krishnas, three Methodists, two Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists each, one Buddhist and one Catholic. The religious affiliation of 8 more people is unknown. In January-June 2020, 20 Muslims, 12 Baptists, 6 Evangelical Christians and 1 Catholic were convicted. The religious affiliation of 3 more people is unknown.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, judging by the media and the Forum 18 service, one of the most common reasons for conviction under this article is the failure to mention the full official legal name of the organization on signs and websites of religious organizations.<sup>28</sup>

Two facts of attracting representatives of Jewish organizations for "illegal missionary work" can be noted - in March 2018, lighting candles in the Hanukkah menorah at the organization's office in Moscow in December 2017 was considered "missionary work",<sup>29</sup> and in February 2019 - a lecture by Israelis at a meeting held in Novosibirsk Jewish community center of the seminar for Jewish youth "Jewish Lifehacker".<sup>30</sup> In 2018, the requirements for religious groups were tightened. The order of the Ministry of Justice "On Amendments to the Form of Notification of the Beginning of the Activities of a Religious Group," which came into force on July 20, requires the notification of the creation of a religious group to contain the personal data of its creator, as well as "information about the fundamentals of religion, places of worship, other religious rites and ceremonies, a leader, a representative, citizens belonging to a religious group."<sup>31</sup>

## **Problems of law enforcement**

One of the main problems of enforcement of anti-extremist legislation is its excessively broad interpretation by law enforcement agencies, resulting in abuses.

On September 21, 2018, the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation issued Instruction No. 602/27 "On strengthening prosecutorial supervision over the execution of

<sup>27</sup>

[http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2593&fbclid=IwAR2bWjbxks7QDxRXWrbFuUvh0DBTPWnuQuVik8JcZf5REKheI-hsTqBEkQ](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2593&fbclid=IwAR2bWjbxks7QDxRXWrbFuUvh0DBTPWnuQuVik8JcZf5REKheI-hsTqBEkQ)

<sup>28</sup> See for example: <https://chelny-biz.ru/news/219457/>, [https://www.ng.ru/facts/2018-06-20/10\\_444\\_hunting.html](https://www.ng.ru/facts/2018-06-20/10_444_hunting.html), [http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article\\_id=2618](http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2618)

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=10204638419078616&id=1779367858](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10204638419078616&id=1779367858)

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.kp.ru/online/news/3385603/?fbclid=IwAR2C2bdkY2ZF5MdpWwlhHzY0AXAzT8f2S0tX1IH74Yuakid26-dfpF4B\\_yY](https://www.kp.ru/online/news/3385603/?fbclid=IwAR2C2bdkY2ZF5MdpWwlhHzY0AXAzT8f2S0tX1IH74Yuakid26-dfpF4B_yY)

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/620812>

laws in detecting, suppressing, disclosing and investigating extremist crimes". The Prosecutor General's Office urged to pay special attention to the investigation of crimes "committed with the use of violence, within an extremist organization or extremist community, including those formed along ethnic lines, in places of detention and using the Internet, as well as those motivated by hatred or hostility towards any social group. It was noted that prosecutors should seek to consider during the investigation the presence of signs of financing of extremist activity, inducement, recruitment, other involvement in extremist communities and organizations, but also to check the presence in the operational and service materials "documents indicating the concealment of crimes, illegal exemption from criminal prosecution, falsification of grounds and conditions of operational and investigative activities, results of operational and investigative activity".

Regional-level prosecutors were instructed to conduct a review of each case of termination of criminal prosecution on rehabilitative grounds or a verdict of acquittal. After examining the validity of the decision, they were to prepare an opinion, which was to be sent to the General Prosecutor's Office no later than one month after the decision of the investigator (inquirer) or the entry into legal force of the court decision.

The General Prosecutor's Office noted that in the absence of a goal of incitement to hatred, it excludes prosecution under Article 282 of the Criminal Code, and the fact of posting materials with signs of incitement to hatred online is not yet a basis for criminal prosecution.

Commenting on the initiation of criminal proceedings under Article 280 of the Criminal Code, the Prosecutor General's Office explained that "appeals to extremist activity will be considered as such only if the purpose of inciting other persons to extremist actions is present",<sup>32</sup>

The document was clearly aimed at stopping the wave of wrongful prosecutions under "extremist" articles, which caused a number of complaints.

There are several groups of people who are unreasonably prosecuted. These are representatives of "wrong" confessions, oppositionists, prisoners, and even collectors.

If we talk about the use of anti-extremist legislation to persecute religious minorities, we are talking primarily about the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses after in April 2017 the Russian Supreme Court recognized the Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia and 395 local religious organizations as extremist organizations under Part. 1 of Article 282.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (organizing the activities of a religious association in respect of which a court has made an effective decision to liquidate in connection with the implementation of extremist activities).

In 2018, one person was convicted and sentenced to mandatory labor, but the sentence was later overturned by a higher court<sup>33</sup>. Twelve people were convicted in 2019 - four of whom were fined, six were sentenced to 1 to 5 years in prison, and two were sentenced to six years in prison<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>32</sup><https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/71972118/>

<sup>33</sup><https://jwrussia.news/news/2018/12/555.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2019/03/651.html>

<sup>34</sup><https://jwrussia.news/news/2019/02/593.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2019/04/708.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2019/07/948.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2019/09/1149.html>,

In the first 11 months of 2020, 46 people were convicted - out of 29 to suspended sentences, six to fines, nine to 1 to 5 years in prison, and two to six years in prison<sup>35</sup> .

Here are some examples. For example, on February 6, 2019, the Railway Court of Orel found Dennis Christensen, a citizen of Denmark, guilty of organizing the activities of an extremist organization (Part 1, Article 282.2 of the Criminal Code) and sentenced him to six years in prison<sup>36</sup> . On June 4, 2020, the Supreme Court of Crimea considered the appeal of the prosecutor's office against the sentence of Jehovah's Witness Artem Gerasimov, increasing the initial sentence from a fine to six years in prison<sup>37</sup> .

At the end of July 2018, Roskomnadzor, the State body controlling the media, added the Jehovah's Witnesses website in Russia [jw-russia.org](http://jw-russia.org) and 10 other Jehovah's Witnesses websites<sup>38</sup> to the Unified Register of Banned Sites .

In early October 2020, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe urged Russia to implement the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and lift the restrictions imposed on Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia, review the sentences previously imposed on Jehovah's Witnesses, repeal the ban on the organization's activities in place since 2017, and amend anti-extremism legislation.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin, speaking 11 December 2018 at a meeting of the Council on the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights, noted that he "does not really understand" why the Witnesses are being persecuted<sup>40</sup> .

In a report published in June 2019 on the human rights situation in 2018, Russian Human Rights Ombudsman Tatyana Moskalkova noted that the sentences of Jehovah's Witnesses "make one wonder about the existence of a conflict between the constitutional right to practice one's religion individually or together with others and the characteristics of extremist activity specified in Article 282.2 of the Russian Criminal Code. Of course, any extremist activity is unacceptable, but the vague criteria for classifying religious materials as extremist

<https://jwrussia.news/news/2019/11/1318.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2019/11/1319.html>,  
<https://jwrussia.news/news/2019/11/1364.html>

<sup>35</sup><https://jwrussia.news/cases/polyarny.html#20200124>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/01/39.html>,  
<https://jwrussia.news/cases/khabarovsk.html#20200204>, <https://jwrussia.news/cases/khabarovsk3.html#20200218>,  
<https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/03/3.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/04/1.html>,  
<https://jwrussia.news/cases/vilyuchinsk.html#20200519>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/06/5.html>,  
<https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/07/20.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/08/1.html>,  
<https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/09/2.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/09/3.html>,  
<https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/09/5.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/09/7.html>,  
<https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/09/10.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/10/3.html>,  
<https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/10/4.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/10/12.html>,  
<https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/11/7.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/11/12.html>

<sup>36</sup><https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-47132228>

<sup>37</sup><https://graty.me/news/sud-v-krymu-v-apellyaczii-izmenil-shtraf-svidetelyu-iegovy-na-shest-let-zaklyucheniya/>

<sup>38</sup><https://kuybcourt-->

[oms.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud\\_delo&srv\\_num=1&name\\_op=doc&number=67551690&delo\\_id=1540005&new=0&text\\_number=12](https://oms.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud_delo&srv_num=1&name_op=doc&number=67551690&delo_id=1540005&new=0&text_number=12)

<sup>39</sup><https://www.svoboda.org/a/30870473.html>

<sup>40</sup><http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59374>

is also unacceptable, when in fact any federal judge at his discretion can ban any book, image, video, or audio recording."<sup>41</sup> .

All this led to the fact that in October 2021 the Plenum of the Supreme Court clarified the application of anti-extremist legislation in terms of violating the right to freedom of religion. The document, in particular, says that actions "consisting solely in the implementation of ... the right to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, including through the individual or joint use of religion, worship or other religious rites and ceremonies. By themselves, they do not form a corpus delicti under Part 2. articles 282.2. Criminal Code of the Russian Federation."<sup>42</sup>

Several cases of Jehovah's Witnesses being acquitted by the courts just before this clarification should be noted. On August 27, 2020 an investigator with the Sakhalin Oblast FSB dismissed a criminal case against two Jehovah's Witnesses from Nevelsk due to lack of corpus delicti: Vyacheslav Ivanov, 50, and Dmitry Kulakov, 23, accused of inciting religious hatred<sup>43</sup> . On October 7, 2020, the May District Court of Kabardino-Balkaria acquitted Jehovahist Yuri Zalipaev, accused of calling for violence against Orthodox Christians and Muslims, finding him not guilty.<sup>44</sup>

In 2018-2020, there were 10 cases (9 of them in 2018) when inmates of certain colonies were tried under part 1 of article 20.3 of the Administrative Code. These were cases involving tattoos in the form of swastikas, etc., and such cases represented a typical "search under the flashlight." The statement on propaganda looked particularly comical in the case of the nationalist Nikita Korolev, who is serving a life sentence where he has almost no one to show it in front of. Equally comical was the February 2018 court sentence in Cheboksary to "confiscate the instrument of the crime" - i.e., the tattoo. Whether it was the prisoner himself who had to cut off the tattoo or whether it was left to bailiffs to do it was not specified<sup>45</sup> . In 2018-2020, six cases were registered against collectors who sold Nazi paraphernalia under Article 20.3 of the Administrative Code ("Production and Sale of Nazi Symbols").<sup>46</sup>

<sup>41</sup>[https://ombudsmanrf.org/upload/files/docs/lib/doclad\\_2018.pdf](https://ombudsmanrf.org/upload/files/docs/lib/doclad_2018.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> <https://ovd.news/express-news/2021/11/22/sud-vpervye-opravdal-svidetelya-iegovy-obvinyaemogo-po-ekstremistskoy-state>

<sup>43</sup> On Sakhalin, the FSB stopped criminal prosecution of believers for talking about God - no corpus delicti. Message from Jehovah's Witnesses. September 24, 2020.

<sup>44</sup><https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/355036/>

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.rapsinews.ru/judicial\\_news/20200604/305886259.html](http://www.rapsinews.ru/judicial_news/20200604/305886259.html),  
<http://www.prokrzn.ru/info/news/po-postanovleniyu-spetsprokuratury-osuzhdennyj-privlechen-k-administrativnoy-otvetstvennosti/>,  
<http://vladprok.ru/po-postanovleniyu-vladimirskoj-spetsprokuratury-osuzhdennyj-privlechen-k-administrativnoj-otvetstven>,  
[https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/web/proc\\_51/news/10459-osuzhdennyj-otbyvayushchiy-nakazanie-v-fku-ik-18-ufsin-rossii-po-murmanskoy-oblasti-privlechen-k-administrativnoy-otvetstvennosti-za-publichnyuy-demonstraciyu-nacistskoy-atributiki-i-simvoliki](https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/web/proc_51/news/10459-osuzhdennyj-otbyvayushchiy-nakazanie-v-fku-ik-18-ufsin-rossii-po-murmanskoy-oblasti-privlechen-k-administrativnoy-otvetstvennosti-za-publichnyuy-demonstraciyu-nacistskoy-atributiki-i-simvoliki),  
<https://penzanews.ru/society/128658-2018>,  
<https://vtinform.com/news/138/121819/>,  
<https://udmproc.ru/news/show/o-rezultatah-proverki-po-faktu-propagandy-natsistskoj-atributiki-v-fku-ik-1-ufsin-rossii-po-ur-1>  
<https://www.newsru.com/crime/20feb2018/tattoonazitrialchu.html>,  
[http://www.34.fsn.su/news/detail.php?ELEMENT\\_ID=369176](http://www.34.fsn.su/news/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=369176)

<sup>46</sup>[https://xn-g1aohgee.xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/UT\\_MVD/novosti/item/19282074](https://xn-g1aohgee.xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/UT_MVD/novosti/item/19282074),  
<https://xn--b1aew1a.64.xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/news/item/21275737/1>,  
<https://www.amur.info/news/2018/03/23/136196>,  
[http://leninsky.irk.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=press\\_dep&op=1&did=676](http://leninsky.irk.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=press_dep&op=1&did=676),

Another group of abusive charges concerns the conviction for any image that featured a swastika, regardless of what the text accompanying the image was about or what the image itself represented.

They even fined a video produced in 2010 by My Duck's Vision for the Ministry of Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh) project "Our Common Victory"<sup>47</sup>, videos using footage from the Soviet television series Seventeen Moments of Spring dedicated to a Soviet spy, who worked among the Nazi leadership (one case in 2018 and three cases in 2019<sup>48</sup>), and a mock "rap battle" between Putin and Hitler (four cases in 2019)<sup>49</sup>, and even for publishing a photo of Soviet soldiers throwing Nazi banners in Red Square during the 1945 Victory Parade<sup>50</sup>.

The April 2019 sentence handed down in Omsk to designer Ilya Frishman for publishing an excerpt from Channel One's TV show "Big Difference," formerly a parody of the film "Seventeen Moments of Spring"<sup>51</sup>, and the December 2019 sentence handed down in Vladikavkaz to student Ilya Gusoyev for publishing from the film "Schindler's List" under Part 1 Article 20.3 of the Administrative Code, caused a scandal. Both sentences were overturned by higher courts<sup>52</sup>.

In at least five cases (two in 2018 and three in 2019), the grounds for the conviction were the songs of the band "Ensemble of Christ the Savior and Mother Earth of Cheese", which were parodies<sup>53</sup>. In several cases, anti-fascists were persecuted for publishing images of Nazi symbols to illustrate critical articles about the far-right. There was one such case in 2019, and two cases in 2020.

There is also the opposite tendency - a reluctance to prevent and investigate crimes, or to convict the perpetrator. This applies mainly to cases of attacks on LGBT people. In the case of the attack on LGBT activists in Moscow in 2018, the investigation seemed to take into account

[http://oblsud.kam.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=press\\_dep&op=1&did=2747](http://oblsud.kam.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=press_dep&op=1&did=2747), <https://mos-gorsud.ru/rs/dorogomilovskij/services/cases/admin/details/3f55b7f2-0bb9-45d6-9495-64e62f747653>

<sup>47</sup><https://www.mk.ru/social/2020/09/03/omskogo-studenta-oshtrafovali-za-repost-reklamnogo-rolika.html>

<sup>48</sup><http://region15.ru/zhitelyu-vladikavkaza-prishlos-zaplatit-shtraf-za-demonstratsiyu-v-sotsialnoj-seti-videorolika-s-natsistskoj-simvolikoj>, <https://59.ru/text/criminal/65183131/>

<sup>49</sup><https://ovdinfo.org/express-news/2020/10/11/zhitelya-orlovskoy-oblasti-oshtrafovali-iz-za-rolika-pro-rep-battl-s-putinyem>,

<http://prokuratura.ivanovo.ru/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BA%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B6%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%B0/>, <https://7x7-journal.ru/news/2019/01/30/sud-v-kostrome-oshtrafoval-blogera-za-publikaciyu-video-rep-battla-putina-s-gitlerom>

<sup>50</sup>[https://www.znak.com/2018-01-25/v\\_arhangelske\\_za\\_hrestomatiynoe\\_foto\\_parada\\_pobedy\\_muzhchinu\\_obvinili\\_v\\_propagande\\_nacizma](https://www.znak.com/2018-01-25/v_arhangelske_za_hrestomatiynoe_foto_parada_pobedy_muzhchinu_obvinili_v_propagande_nacizma)  
<sup>51</sup><https://ngs55.ru/text/incidents/2019/04/12/66051784/>

<sup>52</sup><https://zona.media/news/2019/12/30/schindlerslist>, [https://oblsud--oms.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud\\_delo&srv\\_num=1&name\\_op=case&case\\_id=5734941&result=0&delo\\_id=1502001&hide\\_parts=0](https://oblsud--oms.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud_delo&srv_num=1&name_op=case&case_id=5734941&result=0&delo_id=1502001&hide_parts=0)

<sup>53</sup>[https://elabuzhsky-tat.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud\\_delo&name\\_op=case&id=416316282&uid=8c06aefe-0508-4cb0-b9ab-50966b0cb1a3&deloid=1500001&caseType=&\\_new=0&\\_doc=1&srv\\_num=1](https://elabuzhsky-tat.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud_delo&name_op=case&id=416316282&uid=8c06aefe-0508-4cb0-b9ab-50966b0cb1a3&deloid=1500001&caseType=&_new=0&_doc=1&srv_num=1), [https://oktiabrsky-riz.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud\\_delo&srv\\_num=1&name\\_op=doc&number=32347196&delo\\_id=1500001&new=0&text\\_number=1&case\\_id=32298879](https://oktiabrsky-riz.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud_delo&srv_num=1&name_op=doc&number=32347196&delo_id=1500001&new=0&text_number=1&case_id=32298879), <http://www.prokrzn.ru/info/news/zhitelyu-ryazani-oshtrafovan-za-razmeshchenie-inorfmatcii/>, <https://zona.media/news/2018/03/12/shes>

the xenophobic motive of the attacker. The most scandalous such sentence was in the case of Anton Berezhny, who attacked an LGBT couple in Moscow in 2019, when the attack ended in the death of one person and injury to another. On Feb. 7, 2020, the court sentenced Berezhny to 1 year and 11 months of restricted freedom<sup>54</sup>.

As part of the decriminalization of Article 282 of the Criminal Code, at the end of 2018-2019, criminal cases were terminated, verdicts were cancelled, and sentences were reduced for 50 people, of whom nine people obtained compensation in court (the maximum amount of compensation was 200,000 rubles). Among those whose sentences were cancelled or reduced were Dmitry Demushkin, one of the leaders of nationalists in the 2000s-2010s; Roman Yushkov, a well-known anti-Semite publicist from Perm (in January 2020 he even obtained compensation of 50,000 rubles)<sup>55</sup>; Colonel Vladimir Kvachkov; Dmitry Bobrov, leader of the Popular Socialist Initiative; and Vladislav Pozdnyakov, founder of the Men's State group. In October 2020, the criminal case against Perm anti-Semitic activist R. Yushkov was dismissed - for anti-Semitic rhetoric at a public hearing where he spoke against the construction of a Jewish center in Perm<sup>56</sup>.

## Discrimination

**Discrimination against LGBT people.** First of all, we are referring to the "gay manhunt" campaign that has been going on in Chechnya (Russian Federation Republic) with varying intensity since 2017 (its most recent outbreak was in late 2018-early 2019).<sup>57</sup> During the campaign, dozens (if not hundreds) of people have been tortured and abused, and dozens have been killed. And in a number of cases, they were handed over to relatives to "wash away the dirty stain from the honor of the family." Hundreds fled Chechnya - the Russian LGBT Network alone evacuated 151 people from Russia in 2017-2018<sup>58</sup>.

At the same time, Chechen authorities tried to look for fugitives outside the region. In May 2019, seven men broke into the apartment of one of the volunteers of the Russian LGBT Network in St. Petersburg, where they threatened the activist and other staff members with physical violence and murder. They questioned the activists about the whereabouts of a young Chechen woman who fled the region and the coordinator of the Russian LGBT Network's emergency program, David Isteev<sup>59</sup>.

At the same time, the federal authorities carefully tried to ignore it. Speaking at the July 26, 2018 session of the UN Committee against Torture, Valery Maksimenko, head of the Prosecutor General's Office for the Supervision of Investigations, stated that reports of persecution of gays in Chechnya were not confirmed<sup>60</sup>.

<sup>54</sup><https://zona.media/news/2020/09/07/vokzal>

<sup>55</sup><https://zona.media/news/2020/01/22/perm>

<sup>56</sup><https://www.nakanune.ru/news/2020/10/27/22586815>

<sup>57</sup><https://www.interfax.ru/russia/646058>

<sup>58</sup><https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/356554/>

<sup>59</sup><https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/05/31/chechnya-gay-purge-activist-death-threats-home-invasion/>

<sup>60</sup><https://zona.media/article/2018/07/27/un>

In December 2018, a group of 16 countries of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) called on Russian authorities to investigate human rights violations in Chechnya. Russian Permanent Representative to OSCE Alexander Lukashevich called the report on the situation in Chechnya "deliberately politicized"<sup>61</sup>.

We can also note the intentional disruption of LGBT events - with the connivance of the authorities, or even with their participation. For example, on January 17, 2018 in Volgograd, a group of Cossacks disrupted a picket of LGBT activists by tearing up posters<sup>62</sup>.

— On January 26, 2019, homophobic activists in Voronezh disrupted a picket in support of persecuted LGBT people in Russia<sup>63</sup>.

— On August 28, 2019, members of the National Conservative Movement, NLM, and SERB disrupted a Theater.doc performance of "Come Out of the Closet," which deals with the theme of coming out<sup>64</sup>.

— On 12 November 2020, police and Rospotrebnadzor disrupted the opening of the XIII LGBT film festival Side by Side in St. Petersburg. On November 19, 2020, the Oktyabrsky District Court of St. Petersburg ordered the suspension of the Side by Side LGBT Film Festival for 15 days at the suit of Rospotrebnadzor for failing to maintain social distance between visitors, etc.

At the same time, Kuibyshevsky Court of St. Petersburg extended the suspension of the cafe "Zoom". Earlier the police came there with the assumption that an LGBT film festival was taking place there. Probably the police confused the cafe with the video call service Zoom, where they moved the screenings of Side by Side films<sup>65</sup>.

**Discrimination against Jehovah's Witnesses.** In addition to prosecution, Jehovah's Witnesses are subject to various forms of discrimination. As of April 2020, at least 18 Jehovahists had to quit their jobs because of pressure from law enforcement. In addition, more than 200 "Witnesses," including people with no criminal records, were put on the "List of Persons Involved in Extremism and Terrorism" by Rosfinmonitoring, which deprived them of the opportunity to receive a salary, pension, etc.<sup>66</sup>. By November this number grew to 310 people.<sup>67</sup>

In May 2020, two Jehovah's Witnesses with dual citizenship were stripped of their Russian citizenship.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>61</sup>. <http://www.xgay.ru/news/rainbow/2018/12/21-39533.htm>

<sup>62</sup><https://ovdinfo.org/express-news/2018/12/17/v-volgograde-kazaki-sorvali-lgbt-akciyu-stoyavshie-ryadom-policeyskie-ne>

<sup>63</sup><https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2019/01/d40576/>

<sup>64</sup><https://zona.media/news/2019/08/28/doc>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.xgay.ru/news/rainbow/2020/11/20-43120.htm>

<sup>66</sup><https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/04/13.html>

<sup>67</sup><https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/11/1.html>

<sup>68</sup><https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/05/6.html>, <https://jwrussia.news/news/2020/05/9.html>

**Discrimination against Muslims.** There have been several cases in which regional authorities opposed the construction of mosques - in the Rostov<sup>69</sup> and Saratov regions (there the Saratov City Duma passed special amendments banning the construction of a mosque in one of the districts<sup>70</sup> ) and Samara .<sup>71</sup>

In the Tula region, an organizer of a Muslim religious group was deported from Russia in 2020, although it was never proven that his group was radical<sup>72</sup> .

In 2018 in Kazan and 2020 in Essentuki, there was a case where women were not allowed into the pool because of the Muslim closed swimsuit - burkini<sup>73</sup> .

There were also manifestations of discrimination on the part of law enforcement agencies. Thus, on April 5, 2019 it became known that the Juvenile Affairs Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation in Kazan sent a letter to one of the schools with a request to report girls attending school wearing hijabs, as well as their families. This story caused a scandal and on April 8 the Interior Ministry of the Republic of Tatarstan withdrew the letter<sup>74</sup> .

On the night of May 6, 2018, in Lyantor (Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug), the Rosgvardia detained about 50 Muslims who were taken from cafes and apartments<sup>75</sup> .

On February 7, 2020, in Nizhny Novgorod, representatives of law enforcement agencies conducted document checks of Muslims on the territory of the Cathedral Mosque<sup>76</sup> .

**Discrimination against Jews.** On January 22, 2018, Professor Vyacheslav Baburin, head of the Department of Economic and Social Geography of Russia at Lomonosov Moscow State University's Department of Geography, refused to take a geography exam from one of the students because he was wearing a kippah. The professor suggested that the student, Lev Boroda, leave the classroom or take off his headgear.

The student contacted the secretariat, and as a result another instructor took his exam. According to the student, earlier, when he had asked for permission to miss physical education classes on the occasion of Yom Kippur, the instructor had advised him to "be baptized"<sup>77</sup> .

On October 20, 2020, it became known that Danil Beglec, a defendant in the Moscow case, faced discrimination when he wanted to observe the Sabbath as a Jewish believer. For the

<sup>69</sup>[https://yandex.ru/turbo/don24.ru/s/rubric/obschestvo/rostovskie-musulmane-poprosili-vernut-mechet-na-ulicu-krasnoarmeyskuyu.html?utm\\_source=yxnews&utm\\_medium=desktop](https://yandex.ru/turbo/don24.ru/s/rubric/obschestvo/rostovskie-musulmane-poprosili-vernut-mechet-na-ulicu-krasnoarmeyskuyu.html?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop)

<sup>70</sup><https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4503406>

<sup>71</sup><https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/15537574>

<sup>72</sup><https://tula.mk.ru/incident/2020/07/13/prostyn-na-okne-na-polu-lyaukh-v-tule-obnaruzhili-islamskuyu-yacheyku.html>

<sup>73</sup><https://islamnews.ru/news-sanatoriy-rus-na-severnom-kavkaze-vygnal-musulmanku-iz-basseyna>,  
<https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3760224>

<sup>74</sup><https://www.idelreal.org/a/29863613.html?fbclid=IwAR3n5k3UuSFw9AdcqSBZRxhQJ4PezfDEo9lyU3WfwL5xChOs6LAefYld5Ko>

<sup>75</sup><https://islamnews.ru/news-skr-rassleduet-zhalobu-na-primenenie-silovikami-py-tok-v-otnoshenii-musul-man/>

<sup>76</sup><https://islamnews.ru/news-musulman-nizhnego-novgoroda-oskorbil-pyatnichnyy-reyd-pravookhraniteley-video/>

<sup>77</sup> <https://lenta.ru/news/2018/01/23/study/>

refusal of Beglec and six other inmates to work on the Sabbath, the administration sicced other inmates on them<sup>78</sup>. However, when the scandal broke out, the Fugitive was released on parole.

There have also been isolated instances of discrimination against blacks and Chinese. In December 2019, it became known that in Stavropol some local clubs do not allow black students<sup>79</sup>.

On February 18, 2020, it became known that Cossack patrols are "checking for coronavirus" for newcomers from Asian countries at the Tagansky Ryad market in the 7 Keys neighborhood of Yekaterinburg, where many Chinese migrants live<sup>80</sup>.

**Protestant Discrimination.** On December 4, 2019, the Sverdlovsk Regional Court approved the decision of the Tavda District Court to revoke the residency permit of Baptist pastor Helmut Beringer, who had lived in Russia for 25 years. The revocation of his residence permit was initiated by the FSB, which stated that the pastor was a "supporter of violent change in the constitutional order of the Russian Federation," calling for "opposition to the Russian Orthodox Church."<sup>81</sup>

Protestant worship services were disrupted - the April 7, 2019 Baptist worship service in Novorossiysk<sup>82</sup> and the October 18, 2020 Pentecostal worship service in Orekhovo-Zuyevo<sup>83</sup>.

**Discrimination against "unorthodox Orthodoxy."** On December 19, 2018, the Arbitration Court of Appeals, at a hearing in Tula, decided to seize the 19th-century Ilyinskaya Church in Trubchevsk, Bryansk region, the last historic church that the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (ROAC) had from the community of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church<sup>84</sup>.

## Public Sentiment

2018 was the year when the so-called "Crimean consensus" that emerged in 2014, which ensured a low level of xenophobia by shifting attention to external enemies, was broken. According to public opinion polls, this level has now rolled back to the early 2010s, and in some cases has even become higher.

According to the sociological service Levada Center, the list of "hated peoples" was topped by Roma. In the case of Roma, 1% in 2018 and 2-3% in 2019-2020 were willing to accept them as family members (1% in 2010), 1-2% as friends (1% in 2010), 4-5% as neighbors (3% in 2010), but as work colleagues they were tolerated by 1-2% (2% in 2010), As residents of Russia - 23% in 2018, 29% in 2019 and 23% in 2020 (24% in 2010), 16-19% would only let

<sup>78</sup><https://www.facebook.com/pchikov/posts/4609935692413172>

<sup>79</sup><https://www.kavkazr.com/a/30319758.html>

<sup>80</sup><https://ria.ru/20200218/1564920345.html>

<sup>81</sup><https://novayagazeta.ru/news/2019/12/04/157412-sud-v-ekaterinburge-annuliroval-vid-na-zhitelstvo-baptistskomu-pastoru-helmutu-beringeru>

<sup>82</sup><https://www.facebook.com/ysipko/posts/986116161598611>

<sup>83</sup>[http://www.sclj.ru/news/detail.php?SECTION\\_ID=527&ELEMENT\\_ID=8309](http://www.sclj.ru/news/detail.php?SECTION_ID=527&ELEMENT_ID=8309)

<sup>84</sup><https://credo.press/221611/>

Roma come to Russia temporarily (19% in 2010), 41-44% were ready not to let them come to Russia (3% in 2010).

Second place went to natives of Central Asia. 2% in 2018 and 3-4% in 2019-2020 were ready to accept them as family members (1% in 2010), 3-4% - as friends (1% in 2010), 6-7% - as neighbors (4% in 2010), But as colleagues they were tolerated 3-5% ( in 2010 - 4%), as residents of Russia - 19% in 2018, 22% in 2019 and 18% in 2020 (18% in 2010), 30% in 2018-2019 and 33% in 2020 would only let Central Asians to Russia temporarily (29% in 2010), 30% in 2018, 29% in 2019 and 26% in 2020 were ready not to let them into Russia (29% in 2010).

Third on the list were Africans. 1% in 2018 and 2-3% in 2019-2020 were ready to accept them as family members (1% in 2010), 3-5% - as friends (1% in 2010), 5-6% - as neighbors (5% in 2010), but as colleagues 2-4% were ready to tolerate them (5% in 2010), As residents of Russia - 17%-18% (15% in 2010), 27% in 2018 and 31% in 2019-2020 would only let Africans to Russia temporarily (29% in 2010), 33% in 2018, 30% in 2019 and 28% in 2020 were ready not to let them into Russia (26% in 2010).

They were followed by the Chinese. 2% in 2018 and 4-5% in 2019-2020 were ready to accept them as family members (1% in 2010), 5-6% - as friends (1% in 2010), 8-9% - as neighbors (5% in 2010), but as colleagues 4-7% were ready to tolerate them (5% in 2010), As residents of Russia - 32% in 2018, 28% in 2019 and 25% in 2020 (27% in 2010), 27-30% would only let the Chinese to Russia temporarily (30% in 2010), 27% in 2018, 25% in 2019 and 22% in 2020 were ready not to let them into Russia (32% in 2010).

It is interesting to see Chechens, who had held the top spot on the list for quite a long time, moving up to fifth place. According to the survey, 2-4% were ready to accept them as family members (1% in 2010), 4-5% as friends (1% in 2010), 7-8% as neighbors (4% in 2010), but as co-workers they were tolerated by 2-4% (3% in 2010), As residents of Russia 31-34% (in 2010 22%) (as Chechnya is already a part of Russia these people don't perceive them), 16-19% would only let Chechens come to Russia temporarily (in 2010 19%), 26-27% were not willing to let them come to Russia (in 2010 38%). It is possible that this displacement is the result of widespread xenophobic propaganda about the Roma as a criminal nation, mainly engaged in the drug trade (the same stereotype applies to Africans), combined with the lack of effective means for Roma to counteract this propaganda, which the Chechens possess because many are elementarily afraid of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

In case of Ukrainians 6% in 2018 and 11% in 2019-2020 were ready to accept them as family members (5% in 2010), 6-8% - as friends (4% - in 2010), 8-11% - as neighbors (11% - in 2010), but 3-5% were ready to tolerate them as colleagues at work (6% - in 2010), As residents of Russia - 29% in 2018, 28% in 2019 and 23% in 2020 (31% in 2010), 20-22% would only let Ukrainians to Russia temporarily (20% in 2010), 22% in 2018, 16% in 2019 and 19% in 2020 were not willing to let them into Russia (13% in 2010).

At the last place in the list of "hated peoples" were Jews, where one could observe a slight improvement in comparison with 2010, but still a significant dip compared with the years of

the "Crimean consensus" . 6% in 2018 and 12-13% in 2019-2020 were ready to accept Jews as family members (2% in 2010), 8-10% as friends (3% in 2010), 12-13% as neighbors (8% in 2010), but as work colleagues 6-7% were ready to tolerate them (9% in 2010), As residents of Russia - 20% in 2018, 19% in 2019 and 16% in 2020 (in 2010 - 27%), 11-14% would only let Jews to Russia temporarily (in 2010 - 17%), 13% were ready not to let them into Russia (in 2010 - 17%, while in 2016-2017 this figure decreased to 8% and even 4%).

In addition, one-fifth of Russians (19% each in 2018 and 2020, and 23% in 2019), said they supported the slogan "Russia for Russians" and that it "has long been necessary to carry it out," although in the second half of the 2010s support for this slogan sometimes fell to 10%, not much more - 27-30%, and even slightly more, 30-32% believe that it should be carried out "within reasonable limits,

The same poll also showed a high level of migrant-phobia - 67% of respondents in 2018 and 72-73% in 2019-2020 were in favor of restricting the arrival of migrant workers, and respectively 14 9 and 11% thought that the authorities should facilitate the influx of migrants<sup>85</sup> .

According to another May-June 2019 youth survey, 11% of respondents said they had been discriminated against because of their ethnicity (2% "often" and 9% "rarely"), 10% because of religion (2% "often" and 8% "rarely"), 6% because of language (2% "often" and 4% "rarely"), and 3% because of sexual orientation (1% "often" and 2% "rarely"). At the same time there were many more among "non-Russians" respondents who experienced discrimination than among "Russians" - 8% of "Russians" (1% of them "often"), and 22% of "non-Russians" (3% of them "often") were discriminated against because of their ethnicity. "Non-Russians" were discriminated against more often because of the language they speak (13% vs. 4%) and religion (16% vs. 8%)<sup>86</sup> .

A February 2020 poll by the Levada Center showed a high level of homophobia in the country. 18 percent supported the proposal to "eliminate" LGBT people, while another 32 percent supported the "isolate them from society" option. The same number of people (32%) voted for the "leave them to themselves" option, and 13% even offered to help LGBT people. According to the Levada Center, this kind of ratio has remained unchanged since the late 2000s. (Similar numbers were provided by an April 2019 poll specifically about LGBT people, which showed that 56% of respondents had a negative attitude toward them, and 53% believed that they should not enjoy the same rights as other citizens.)<sup>87</sup>

The same survey revealed a high level of "sectophobia" - 21% of respondents supported the option to "liquidate" "sectarians," while 44% supported the "isolation from society" option. Over the past decade, the number of supporters of the "liquidate" option fell from 26% in 2008, while the number of those who wanted to "isolate" "sectarians" rose from 27% to 41% .

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<sup>85</sup><https://www.levada.ru/2020/09/23/ksenofobiya-i-natsionalizm-2/>

<sup>86</sup><https://www.levada.ru/2020/06/26/lichnyj-opyt-diskriminatsii/>

<sup>87</sup><https://www.levada.ru/2019/05/23/otnoshenie-k-lgbt-lyudyam/>

<sup>88</sup><https://www.levada.ru/2020/04/20/sotsialnaya-distantsiya-2>

These surveys are supported by information about anti-Roma riots of a nationalist nature, of which there were three in 2018-2019. In May 2018, residents of Ust-Abakan (Khakassia) forced the tabor to leave and looted Roma property after a local resident was killed in a fight with the Roma<sup>89</sup>.

In early August 2018, Roma from the village of Urazovo, Valuy District, Belgorod Region, fled the village amid rumors of a pogrom after one of the Roma was detained on suspicion of raping and murdering a 9-year-old girl. Although there was no pogrom, two or three houses belonging to Roma were burned<sup>90</sup>.

On June 14, 2019 riots broke out in the village of Chemodanovka, Penza Oblast, provoked by a fight between Russians and Roma that took place the day before. People gathered for a "people's gathering" blocked the federal highway M-5 "Ural" and demanded the eviction of Roma from the village (six people, recognized as instigators, were subsequently sentenced to fines or compulsory labor. On June 17, 2019, it became known that all of the Roma had left. However, by the end of July, they began to return<sup>91</sup>.

The growth of migrant-phobia is illustrated by the anti-migrant protests in Yakutsk in March 2019, the reason for which was the rape of a local resident by a visitor from Kyrgyzstan. About three thousand people came to a meeting on March 18 at the Triumph sports complex with representatives of the authorities. The mayor, Sardana Avksentieva, promised to intensify the fight against illegal migration. The head of the republic also promised to identify and deport the illegal migrants and to take new restrictive and prohibitive measures if necessary. There were reports in the media about threats to migrants from local residents, pogroms of stalls. It became known that at least five Kyrgyz were beaten on the streets of Yakutsk.<sup>92</sup>

Another egregious example of the prevalence and entrenchment of migrant-phobia in society was the appointment in 2019 of an employee of a Magnit chain store in Shchelkovo, near Moscow, who was on trial for a xenophobic attack on a visitor from Tajikistan, as director of a neighboring Magnit.<sup>93</sup>

An expression of Islamophobia are the protests against the construction of mosques. In 2018-2020 they were noted in Yekaterinburg and Perm.<sup>94</sup> In the latter, protesters were convinced that the appearance of a mosque would lead to an increase in the number of migrants in the area.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>89</sup><https://zona.media/news/2018/05/27/ust-abakan>

<sup>90</sup><https://zona.media/article/2018/08/07/urazovo%D0%A2%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80>

<sup>91</sup><https://lenta.ru/news/2019/07/23/nazad/>, <https://meduza.io/feature/2019/06/17/net-nigde-tsygan-kak-v-vodukanuli>, <https://penzaobzor.ru/news/2019384413/sereznyj-konflikt-v-chemodanovke-penzenskoj-oblasti-postradali-5-chelovek/>, <https://zona.media/chronicle/chemodanovka#24494>

<sup>92</sup><https://takiedela.ru/2019/04/narod-spit-kak-medved/>,

<https://glava.sakha.gov.ru/uploads/ckfinder/userfiles/files/442.pdf>, <https://zona.media/news/2019/03/20/yakutsk>, <https://sakhalive.ru/nakipelo-v-yakutske-mnogotyisyachnyiy-narod-ne-pomeshhaetsya-v-triumfe-na-antimigrantskoe-sobranie/>, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BvJa6ASINqI/>

<sup>93</sup>[https://refugee.ru/istorii/napadenie-v-magnite-prodavets-supermarketa-izbila-akushera-ginekologa-iz-tadzhikistana/?utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=sbor-sredstv-dlya-zhertvy-napadeniya-na-poch](https://refugee.ru/istorii/napadenie-v-magnite-prodavets-supermarketa-izbila-akushera-ginekologa-iz-tadzhikistana/?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=sbor-sredstv-dlya-zhertvy-napadeniya-na-poch)

<sup>94</sup>[https://www.e1.ru/news/spool/news\\_id-66466663.html](https://www.e1.ru/news/spool/news_id-66466663.html)

<sup>95</sup><https://mediazavod.ru/news/society/zhiteli-permi-vystupili-protiv-stroitelstva-mecheti-u-tsentralnogo-rynka/>

The persistence of anti-Semitism in the mass consciousness is evidenced by its public manifestations, which receive media coverage.

On December 3, 2018 it became known that Bryansk lawyer Sergei Maslov appealed to the local Department of Internal Affairs with a demand to initiate a criminal case in connection with the installation of a menorah on the city's Partyzan Square. In his opinion, the appearance of a religious symbol in a public space contradicts the law, since the square is not intended for religious ceremonies<sup>96</sup>. A year later, in December 2019, Maslov and Alexander Kupriyanov, former secretary of the Bryansk regional committee of the CPRF, appealed to the FSB department, the prosecutor's office, and the city authorities with a statement demanding that the December celebration of the Jewish Hanukkah holiday in Partizan Square not be allowed, stating that the celebrations allegedly "generate anti-Semitic sentiment in society" and that the organization holding them and Hesed Tikva "is actually a foreign agent, acting in the region for only one nationality"<sup>97</sup>.

On August 23, 2019, a group of "*citizens of the Soviet Union, natives of Krasnodar*," adherents of an organization advocating the revival of the USSR, came to the local synagogue, and for nearly an hour tried to "expose" the community chairman, using the standard set of anti-Semitic clichés<sup>98</sup>.

On October 12, 2019, R. Yushkov organized an Orthodox prayer service "against the Satanic abomination of the Jews" at the site of the construction of a Hasidic center with a synagogue in Perm. The blessing for the prayer service was given by Archimandrite Sergius (Romanov), spiritual leader of the Sredneural'sky nunnery in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary "Sporitel'nitsa Khibov".<sup>99</sup>

Sergius Romanov himself began delivering anti-Semitic sermons posted online in at least 2019, but they gained attention in late April 2020, when Sergius delivered a sermon against church closures during the coronavirus epidemic, lavishly peppered his speech with anti-Semitic clichés, including the statement that Patriarch Alexy II, Patriarch Kirill's predecessor, had allegedly been killed for "refusing to submit to the Jewish regime," and calling on the people to "liberate themselves from the Jewish yoke in Russia"<sup>100</sup>. At the end of May 2020, he again made a statement about the "satanic leadership of the country," and, in parallel to accusing "Zionists" of claiming the need to destroy Russians, he explicitly called for a revolt.<sup>101</sup>

Two more appeals, full of anti-Semitic rhetoric, appeared on June 28 and July 3, 2020. They stated, for example, that Russia is "ruled by Chabadniks and Hasids."<sup>102</sup> However, the most

<sup>96</sup>[https://www.bragazeta.ru/news/2018/12/03/v-bryanske-potrebovali-vozbudit-delo-iz-za-ustanovki-evreyskoy-menory/?fbclid=IwAR0Q-73HObry7-XcEkkgY7KHIXcFTvKa109iCgCubkn4-RYo\\_etdJVWE-M0](https://www.bragazeta.ru/news/2018/12/03/v-bryanske-potrebovali-vozbudit-delo-iz-za-ustanovki-evreyskoy-menory/?fbclid=IwAR0Q-73HObry7-XcEkkgY7KHIXcFTvKa109iCgCubkn4-RYo_etdJVWE-M0)

<sup>97</sup><https://lechaim.ru/news/zhiteli-bryanska-obratilis-v-fsb-po-povodu-evrejskogo-prazdnika/>

<sup>98</sup><https://lechaim.ru/news/ot-finansovoj-piramidy-k-narodnomu-kontrolyu/>

<sup>99</sup>[https://www.ng.ru/facts/2019-11-05/12\\_475\\_jews.html](https://www.ng.ru/facts/2019-11-05/12_475_jews.html)

<sup>100</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFzjZvsuAEE>

<sup>101</sup><https://3rm.info/main/80313-slovo-dobrogo-pastyrja-shiigumen-sergij-romanov-sejchas-predlagajut-pohuli-boga-i-zhivi-spokojno-video.html>

<sup>102</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezB0-IQIasw>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYk1bUTbLUS>

scandalous statement on this topic was an article by Putin's advisor Sergei Glazyev, "Occupation," published May 6, 2019, in the blog of the nationalist newspaper Zavtra, which spoke of the possibility of: "mass relocation to the "cleansed" lands of the Russian population of Southeast Ukraine of residents of the Promised Land tired of the permanent war in the Middle East." It is possible that the article (which Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov called Glazyev's "personal opinion")<sup>103</sup> and the scandal that followed was the reason for Glazyev's removal from his advisors in August 2019.

We can note the persistence of xenophobia among soccer fans. Although such cases are relatively few - from 2 to 4 per year, it is alarming that we are talking about fans of famous clubs (Spartak, Fakel, CSKA).<sup>104</sup> This means that the clubs failed to build a system that would prevent the spread of xenophobic attitudes and their public manifestations at games.

### **Islamism in Russia**

Radical Islamists are quite widely represented in Russia. The main organizations are Hizb ut-Tahrir and Tablighi Jamaat. Less popular are "Takfir wa-al-hijra", "Nurjular". There are also adherents of the "Islamic State" in Russia. In 2018, 62 Islamists were convicted of extremist activity, 78 in 2019, and 34 in the first 11 months of 2020.

A large proportion of those convicted are Hizb ut-Tahrir followers (22 in 2018, 38 in 2019, 27 in 2020). This party, founded in 1953 in East Jerusalem, is banned in most Arab and a number of Muslim countries, as well as in Germany for anti-Semitism. Its officially declared goals are "complete liberation from the domination of infidels, who now dominate every corner of the world."<sup>105</sup> . Hizb ut-Tahrir researchers E. Karagianis and K. McCauley note that the organization's actual position on the question of permissible means of struggle is not as unambiguous, and describe the situation as follows: "On the one hand we can say that they have been committed to nonviolent methods of struggle for 50 years. On the other hand, we can say that they have been waiting half a century for the right moment to launch such a struggle<sup>106</sup> ".

In a 2013 ECHR case involving Hizb ut-Tahrir, the ECtHR stressed that its activities may be restricted by the state because its ideology contradicts the values of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms<sup>107</sup> .

Another thing is that, unlike the same IS, the party does not currently practice terrorist methods, so by recognizing it as a terrorist organization rather than an extremist one, the

<sup>103</sup> <https://ria.ru/20190507/1553324832.html>

<sup>104</sup><https://www.championat.com/football/news-4154931-rfs-oshtrafoval-zenit-i-spartak-na-630-tysjach-rublej-i-zakryl-tribunu-otkrytie-areny.html>, <https://rostov.ru/society/fk-rostov-oshtrafovali-za-necenzurnye-vykriki-boleschikov.html>, <https://www.sports.ru/football/1078734067.html>, <https://www.championat.com/football/news-3407997-luch-oshtrafovali-na-50-tys-rublej-za-broshennogo-petuha-i-oskorblenija-grigorjana.html>, <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/counteraction/2020/06/d42577/https%3A%2F%2Fyandex.ru%2Fsport>, <https://tass.ru/sport/92780491>

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.idelreal.org/a/28717251.html>

<sup>106</sup><https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/235276/>

<sup>107</sup> [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-117127#{%22itemid%22:\[%22001-117127%22\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-117127#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-117127%22]})

Russian authorities have automatically ensured that its activists receive heavier sentences than their "colleagues" from other Islamist organizations, who receive not very long prison terms or even suspended sentences for the same thing, seems erroneous.

The second most popular (judging by the number of people convicted) is the movement Tabligi Jamaat (21, 17 and 6 people respectively were convicted). In 2009, when it was prohibited by the Supreme Court, it was noted that "the activities of the structural subdivisions of DT 'threaten interethnic and inter-confessional stability in Russian society and the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. In addition, it is noted that the version of Islam preached by HT is close to jihadist and, therefore, the movement has often been a "gateway" for a number of future terrorists<sup>108</sup> .

As for the influence of radical Islamists on the situation in the country, on the one hand, the rallies they gather are few in number. For example, no more than 20 people came to the rally against the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in the magazine Shali Eblo<sup>109</sup> . But this was largely due to a fear of being "exposed" to the security services. On the other hand, it can be recalled that several thousand people (some reports say 5,000) from Russia went to help IS. Moreover, the Islamic support card is being actively played by Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, who actively supports the Islamization of his subordinated territories. In early December, he caused a shock in France when the Chechen State Television and Radio Company under his control published a laudatory report about Anzorov, the murderer of a French teacher, as a result of which Vladimir Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov had to specifically stress that the murder could not be justified.<sup>110</sup>

The first Islamist attack in Tatarstan after a number of years of silence was an alarming signal. On October 30, 2020, an Islamist teenager armed with a knife attacked an Interior Ministry department in Kukmor, Tatarstan, but was shot and killed by police officers. He called the police officers "infidels" and shouted "Allahu akbar!" as he attacked them. One of the police officers was wounded<sup>111</sup> .

## **Situation in Crimea**

The Hizb ut-Tahrir party was not banned in Crimea when it belonged to Ukraine, so by the time it came under Russian control, there was an extensive Hizb ut-Tahrir infrastructure. As a result, Crimea has logically become a place where Islamist activists from which are increasingly put on trial. Four people were convicted there in 2018, 12 in 2019, and 18 in 2020.

The situation in Crimea is complicated by the actions of another organization - the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People. The leadership of the Mejlis chose to remain loyal to Kiev and leave for the territory under Ukrainian control.

<sup>108</sup> [https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan\\_news/agentstvo-delam-religiy-predupredilo-kovarstve-tabligi-230992/](https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/agentstvo-delam-religiy-predupredilo-kovarstve-tabligi-230992/)

<sup>109</sup> <https://ria.ru/20201029/miting-1582074869.htm>

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/357382/>

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/734870>

In 2015, Mejlis leaders were among the organizers and inspirers of the Crimea blockade. In 2016, Lenur Ilyamov, one of the leaders of the Mejlis, announced the creation of the Crimean Tatar battalion named after Noman Chelebidzhikhan, which was to guard the border with Crimea (and in the future, become the vanguard of the invading army). Later it was joined by the Asker civilian association. However, at the beginning of 2020, both the battalion and Asker, which was never incorporated into the Ukrainian army, were removed from the border.

Several former battalion soldiers who returned to Crimea were convicted in 2019-2020 for their service in the battalion. Thus, Fevzi Saganji was sentenced in January 2019 to 10.5 years in prison, Edem Kadyrov to 4 years<sup>112</sup>, Dilyaver Gafarov was sentenced on August 28, 2019 to 10 years in prison<sup>113</sup>. On July 22, 2020 Nariman Mezhmedinov was sentenced to eight years in prison<sup>114</sup>.

On December 10, 2020, the Supreme Court of Crimea found Lenur Islyamov guilty of organizing an energy blockade of the peninsula in 2015 and sentenced him in absentia to 19 years in a strict regime colony<sup>115</sup>.

On April 26, 2016, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Crimea recognized the Mejlis as an extremist organization and banned it. On September 29, 2016. The Supreme Court approved this decision.<sup>116</sup>As evidence that the Mejlis is an extremist organization, the data on its actions both in the Ukrainian and Russian periods of the history of Crimea were cited - blocking the activities of local self-government and law enforcement agencies, an unauthorized rally resulting in the destruction of property and harm to individual citizens in February 2014), seizure of the border post in Armyansk in 3 May 2014, participation in the blockade of Crimea and calls of the Mejlis leadership to organize it, as well as preventing the restoration of el At that time, the Mejlis took responsibility for organizing an "energy blockade" of Crimea, for which its activists blew up power lines leading to Crimea, which left a number of settlements, including those populated by Crimean Tatars, without electricity.

In May 2018, the FSB announced that it had detained a group of saboteurs in Crimea created by order of Mejlis head Refat Chubarov. According to the FSB, the group members were going to hold intimidation actions in Crimea against the pro-Russian Crimean Tatars (and even set fire to the house of the Crimean Mufti in January 2018), as well as intend to stir up interethnic and inter-confessional discord on the peninsula. Alexander Steshenko, a member of the group who told this story, was sentenced to 2 years in a colony-settlement, and in 2019 was

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27077/4149484/>, <https://rg.ru/2019/01/25/reg-ufo/v-krymu-uchastnik-vooruzhennogo-ukrainskogo-batalona-osuzhden-na-105-let.html>

<sup>113</sup> <https://avdet.org/ru/2019/09/11/informacionnaja-spravka-let-2019-go/>

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4460336>

<sup>115</sup>

[https://www.rbc.ru/politics/10/12/2020/5fd1cbc79a79479d34a2954a?utm\\_source=yxnews&utm\\_medium=desktop](https://www.rbc.ru/politics/10/12/2020/5fd1cbc79a79479d34a2954a?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop)

<sup>116</sup> [http://vsrf.ru/stor\\_pdf.php?id=1487872](http://vsrf.ru/stor_pdf.php?id=1487872)

exchanged as part of the exchange of prisoners and detainees between Russia and Ukraine. Once in Ukraine, Steshenko said that he testified under torture and that there was no group.<sup>117</sup>

## **Nationalists and their influence**

The mass nationalist movement in Russia, thanks to the efforts of law enforcement agencies, was crushed back in the mid-2010s - the main organizations were banned, the leaders were in prison or fled abroad. On top of that was the split in connection with the events in Ukraine - into pro-government and pro-Ukrainian groups. One of the surviving "old" organizations, the Russian Imperial Movement, unexpectedly gained international fame in 2020 by being added by the Trump administration to the list of terrorist organizations<sup>118</sup>.

All of this together led to a sharp drop in the number of mass events, which used to be the "show of force" for the nationalists. Of all the "alternative calendar" events organized by them in the 2000s-2010s, only the "Russian March" on 4 November remained relatively massive, but it split into several marches in Moscow (sometimes up to four), the number of which also fell sharply - to 100-200 people (the exception was one of the "marches" in 2019, which brought together up to 800 people, but this may have been due to the presence of left-wing activists there<sup>119</sup>), and in the regions the matter is increasingly limited to displaying banners and handing out leaflets.

At the moment this void is being attempted to be filled by the Two Headed Eagle Society (renamed Tsargrad on November 22, 2020). The manifesto of the society, the list of "Great victories of Russian arms" significantly begins with the victory over the Khazar Kaganate in the 10th century, which many nationalists see as "overthrow of the Jewish yoke", and as one of its main objectives, it puts "reunification of the Russian people", i.e. accession of the territories of neighboring countries, where live (or should live, according to the authors of the manifesto) Russians. "Tsargrad" claims to "unite ... all the healthy forces of Russian society, ready not only in word but also in deed to oppose any revolutionary unrest in defense of peace and order in Russia. There are also other traditional statements by nationalists - about "fighting Russophobia in all its manifestations" and "protecting the domestic labor market from the influx of low-skilled workers from the Central Asian republics and Transcaucasus," with a clear failure to understand that given the current low wages, the local population is simply not interested in the jobs taken by migrants<sup>120</sup>. At the same time, society seeks to extend its genealogy to the pre-revolutionary Black Hundreds, clearly stating that it "is a continuator of the ideas and traditions of the Union of the Russian People"<sup>121</sup>.

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.newsru.com/russia/21may2018/crimeanewextremists.html>,

<https://www.unian.net/society/10652580-byvshiy-politzaklyuchenny-steshenko-o-pytkah-fsb-v-krymu-topili-v-vode-dushili-paketom-i-bili-tokom.html>

<sup>118</sup> <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/06/04/2020/5e8b3ee39a79470191d13748>

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2019/11/d41663/>

<sup>120</sup> <https://rusorel.info/manifest/>

<sup>121</sup> <https://rusorel.info/turnir-po-regbi-v-den-soyuza-russkogo-naroda/>

Also flirting with nationalism is the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, led by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (who died in 2022), which has its own faction in the Duma and governor posts in two regions. In 2018-2019, the LDPR held "International Congresses of Peaceful Forces" in Moscow, in the State Duma building, attended by far-right political organizations from different countries. In October 2019, the LDPR invited a delegation from the far-right Britain First party to Moscow<sup>122</sup>.

Other new organizations that have become prominent include the group Men's State, which emerged on the social network Vkontakte in 2016 and professes the so-called national patriarchy (nationalism with a strong admixture of male chauvinism). In 2020, supporters of this group switched from Internet threats to real attacks<sup>123</sup>.

In 2018 and 2019 in the social network "VKontakte" there was a community that held a beauty contest "Miss Hitler". Girls were invited to send in their photos describing why they "love and honor Adolf Hitler's Third Reich."<sup>124</sup> We can also note the admission of nationalists to public actions of the liberal opposition - the annual march in memory of Boris Nemtsov, the 2018 action of A. Navalny "He is not our tsar", protests against the non-admission of opposition candidates to the elections to the Moscow City Duma in 2019, etc. .<sup>125</sup>

We can note the trend toward cooperation between some nationalists and leftists. This is primarily the work of the Standing Conference of National Patriotic Forces of Russia (PDS NPSR) coalition, which in 2017 supported CPRF presidential candidate Pavel Grudinin. In addition to the CPRF, the left-wing radical organizations Left Front and ROT-Front began cooperating with nationalists at the local level, participating in their rallies as well. In spite of the scarcity of such participation on the part of the nationalists, it carries a significant danger, accustoming the leftist and liberal opposition respectively to the "normality" of the ultra-right. On the other hand, it can be noted that some of the oppositionists are ready to ally with nationalists for the sake of fighting the authorities. Such promiscuity has already led to the fact that during the "Smart Voting" campaign organized by A. Navalny in September 2020 in Novosibirsk among those recommended to vote for was a well-known local nationalist Rostislav Antonov, who won the election as a member of the City Duma<sup>126</sup>. The call to vote for Antonov provoked protests among the liberal part of the opposition<sup>127</sup>.

## Conclusion

In Russia 2018-2020 a number of innovations in anti-extremist legislation were adopted. The most important of these changes were the decriminalization of Article 282 of the Criminal

<sup>122</sup>[https://www.britainfirst.org/report\\_britain\\_first\\_visits\\_russian\\_parliament\\_and\\_offices\\_of\\_ldpr](https://www.britainfirst.org/report_britain_first_visits_russian_parliament_and_offices_of_ldpr)

<sup>123</sup><https://esquire.ru/articles/202573-tiktok-blogera-yanu-leonovu-izbili-iz-za-nepriyomykh-video-v-napadenii-priznalo-muzhskoe-gosudarstvo/>

<sup>124</sup><https://regnum.ru/news/2482579.html>, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/russian-social-media-network-takes-down-page-of-miss-hitler-beauty-pageant>

<sup>125</sup><https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2018/05/d39325/>, <https://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/news/racism-nationalism/2020/03/d42152/>

<sup>126</sup><https://sibkrai.ru/news/2126/937993/>

<sup>127</sup><https://www.facebook.com/visboris/posts/3257433274334828>, <https://www.facebook.com/lev.shlosberg/posts/3630351060309250>

Code, which had been the main article of the Criminal Code for several years used to convict people who committed crimes motivated by xenophobia, in December 2018, and the adoption in May 2020 of the Strategy for Countering Extremism until 2025.

Unfortunately, discriminatory legislation, such as the so-called "gay propaganda ban," which discriminates against LGBT people, and the "missionary law," adopted in 2016, also remained in place. However, some of the wording of the latter law was clarified by rulings of the Constitutional Court from 2018-2020.

We can note the authorities' active struggle against hate crimes, which has resulted in extremely low rates of such crimes for a number of years.<sup>128</sup> The number of convicted persons, whose data were collected through open source monitoring, dropped significantly after decriminalization of Article 282 of the Criminal Code (and almost 50 people managed to have their sentences reduced or cancelled or criminal cases terminated) - from 584 people in 2018 to 199 in 2019 and 132 people by the end of 11 months of 2020. In addition, work on blocking xenophobic Internet resources was actively pursued.

Unfortunately, during this period there were also cases of inappropriate enforcement of anti-extremist legislation, when due to its overly broad interpretation by law enforcement agencies, representatives of "wrong" (and sometimes traditional) religions, oppositionists, anti-fascists and even collectors were prosecuted as extremists. In a number of cases, convictions were handed down for any image that featured a swastika, regardless of what the text accompanying the image was about or what the image itself represented. Such processes lead to the discrediting of the fight against extremism, which part of the population begins to see simply as the elimination of those "undesirable" to the authorities.

At the same time, since 2018 we have recorded a certain increase in xenophobic attitudes and a rise in latent xenophobia. Polls show a high level of migrant-phobia, homophobia, and "sectophobia. This, however, does not convert into the creation of a major nationalist party. The mass nationalist movement has been in decline since the mid-2010s, largely due to massive opposition from the authorities. If this pressure disappears or wanes, the situation could change. For now, attempts to somehow fill this void remain unsuccessful.

The trend for nationalists to cooperate with leftist and rightist opposition to the authorities remains dangerous. Such cooperation, despite its relatively modest scale, teaches the opposition that the ultra-right are "normal partners," and can contribute to their further legalization.

The situation with the presence of radical Islamism in Russia remains difficult. A number of international Islamist organizations, ranging from Hizb ut-Tahrir to ISIS, are represented in Russia. It is difficult to talk about their real popularity, but judging by the number of convictions, these organizations have a network of cells, whose activities range from propaganda to recruiting new fighters. At the same time, the widespread use of the Internet and social networks has made it easier for radicals to attract new adherents. A specific

<sup>128</sup> Xenophobia, Radicalism and Hate Crimes in the OSCE Area, 2018-20// MEI-ECSD, pp. 138. URL: [https://www.ru.civic-nation.org/report\\_2018\\_2020\(ver%202\).pdf](https://www.ru.civic-nation.org/report_2018_2020(ver%202).pdf).

situation has developed in Crimea, where Hizb ut-Tahir was allowed to operate when the peninsula belonged to Ukraine.

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