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RUSSIA: 53 Jehovah's Witnesses facing criminal prosecution - list

By Victoria Arnold, Forum 18

Full list of 53 Jehovah's Witnesses charged or named as suspects or currently on trial for "extremism"-related offences as of 11 July 2018. Of these, 22 are in detention, 3 under house arrest and 27 under travel restrictions. Only one is not under restrictions as the criminal investigation proceeds.

More than 50 Jehovah's Witnesses are now facing criminal prosecution for exercising their right to freedom of religion and belief. Law enforcement agencies carried out yet more armed raids, searches, and arrests in a further five Russian regions in June and early July, bringing to 22 the number of people now in detention. Another three are under house arrest, and 27 are under travel restrictions.

A full list of Jehovah's Witnesses currently (12 July 2018) known to be facing criminal prosecution – in detention, under house arrest, under travel restrictions, and in one case under no known restrictions - is given below.

The most recent arrests include Anastasiya Polyakova in Omsk, the first woman known to have been placed in pre-trial detention, although several others had already been charged or named as suspects and put under travel restrictions (see F18News 11 July 2018 http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2394).

A total of 53 Jehovah's Witnesses have been charged or named as suspects or are currently on trial for "extremism"-related offences as of 11 July 2018. The majority of these people – 12 women, 37 men – are under investigation for "continuing the activities" of the banned Jehovah's Witness Administrative Centre and its local communities.

As of 11 July 2018, 22 people are in pre-trial detention (21 men, 1 woman), three people are under house arrest (all men), and 27 people (11 women, 16 men) are under travel restrictions. Only one man is currently under no restrictions.

For exercising their right to freedom of religion and belief, the Jehovah's Witnesses stand accused of continuing the activities of their national-level Administrative Centre and the local communities which it oversaw. All of these were outlawed as "extremist" by Supreme Court rulings of 20 April and 17 July 2017 (see F18News 18 July 2017 http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2297).

International human rights law, however, allows anyone to exercise freedom of religion and belief without state permission.

Muslims also targeted

Muslim readers of works by theologian Said Nursi are also targeted by "anti-extremism" raids, prosecutions and jailings. Continuing a pattern of jailings re-started in 2017, the most recent jailing was of Imam Komil Odilov who was jailed for two years for meeting with others to study Nursi's works. Six Muslim men are known to be currently in prison – or in custody with appeals pending – having been found guilty of involvement in meetings to read Nursi's works (see F18News 8 June 2018 http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2386).

Full list of Jehovah's Witnesses facing criminal charges

Although no Jehovah's Witnesses have yet been given formal jail terms, many have been detained for a long time. These include Dennis Ole Christensen (born 18 December 1972) who was arrested on 25 May 2017 and put into detention on 26 May 2017.

Investigators have opened criminal cases against these Jehovah's Witnesses under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1 ("Organisation of the activity of a social or religious association or other organisation in relation to which a court has adopted a decision legally in force on liquidation or ban on the activity in connection with the carrying out of extremist activity") or Part 2 ("Participation in the activity of a social or religious association or other organisation in relation to which a court has adopted a decision legally in force on liquidation or ban on the activity in connection with the carrying out of extremist activity"), and in a few instances under Article 282.3, Part 1 ("Financing of extremist activity").

If convicted, they could receive lengthy prison sentences or heavy fines (see Forum 18's Russia "extremism" religious freedom survey http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2215). It is unknown when any of their cases will come to court.

The list below gives: name, date of birth – date of initial arrest; date of decision to put in detention/under house arrest/under travel restrictions, date to be released; charged/suspect under [Criminal Code Article]; whether or not on Rosfinmonitoring "List of Terrorists and Extremists".

--- 22 in Detention

Ivanovo – Shuya

1) Dmitry Vasilyevich Mikhailov, born 25 October 1977 – arrested on 19 April 2018; detained on 29 May 2018, until 19 July 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2 and Criminal Code Article 282.3, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Krasnoyarsk

2) Andrei Garafetanovich Stupnikov, born 17 September 1973 – arrested on 3 July 2018; detained on 4 July 2018, until 2 September 2018; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Magadan

3) Konstantin Nikolayevich Petrov, born 9 August 1986 – arrested on 30 May 2018; detained on 1 June 2018, until 29 July 2018; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

4) Ivan Grigoryevich Puyda, born 5 November 1978 – arrested in Khabarovsk on 30 May 2018; detained in Magadan on 1 June 2018, until 30 July 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

5) Sergey Liviyevich Yerkin, born 23 June 1953 – arrested on 30 May 2018; detained on 1 June 2018, until 29 July 2018; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

6) Yevgeny Anatolyevich Zyablov, born 9 March 1977 – arrested on 30 May 2018; detained on 1 June 2018, until 29 July 2018; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Murmansk – Polyarny

7) Roman Nikolayevich Markin, born 18 March 1974 – arrested on 18 April 2018; detained no later than 20 April 2018, until 11 October 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

8) Viktor Fyodorovich Trofimov, born 26 March 1957 – arrested on 18 April 2018; detained no later than 20 April 2018, until 12 October 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Omsk

9) Anastasiya Andreyevna Polyakova, born 25 May 1984 – arrested on 4 July 2018; detained on 6 July 2018, until unknown date (probably no later than 4 September); charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

10) Sergei Valeryevich Polyakov, born 28 April 1972 – arrested on 4 July 2018; detained on 6 July 2018, until unknown date (probably no later than 4 September); charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Orenburg

11) Aleksandr Gennadyevich Suvorov, born 20 April 1980 – arrested on 16 May; detained on 19 May, 2018, until 14 July 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

12) Vladimir Yuryevich Kochnev, born 15 October 1979 – arrested on 16 May; detained on 19 May, 2018, until 14 July 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Oryol

13) Dennis Ole Christensen, born 18 December 1972 – arrested on 25 May 2017; detained on 26 May 2017, until 1 August 2018; currently on trial under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; added to Rosfinmonitoring List on 27 March 2018

Primorye – Vladivostok

14) Valentin Pavlovich Osadchuk, born 15 March 1976 – arrested on 19 April 2018; detained on 23 April 2018, until 20 September 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Saratov

15) Konstantin Viktorovich Bazhenov, born 10 May 1975 – arrested on 12 June 2018; detained on 14 June 2018, until 12 August 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

16) Aleksey Vladimirovich Budenchuk, born 27 July 1982 – arrested on 12 June 2018; detained on 14 June 2018, until 12 August 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

17) Felix Khasanovich Makhammadiev, born 14 December 1984 – arrested on 12 June 2018; detained on 14 June 2018, until 12 August 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Tatarstan – Naberezhnyye Chelny

18) Ilkham Shamilyevich Karimov, born 9 February 1981 – arrested on 27 May; detained on 29 May 2018, until 25 July 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

19) Konstantin Viktorovich Matrashov, born 22 August 1988 arrested on 27 May; detained on 29 May 2018, until 25 July 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1 (and 1.1 and 2?); not on Rosfinmonitoring List

20) Vladimir Nikolayevich Myakushin, born 6 November 1987 – arrested on 27 May; detained on 29 May 2018, until 25 July 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1 (and 1.1 and 2?); not on Rosfinmonitoring List

21) Aydar Maratovich Yulmetyev, born August 1993 – arrested on 29 May; detained on 31 May 2018, until 25 July 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1 (and 1.1 and 2?); not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Tomsk

22) Sergey Gennadyevich Klimov, born 26 March 1970 – arrested on 3 June 2018; detained on 5 June 2018, until 4 August 4 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

--- 3 under House Arrest

Bashkortostan – Ufa

1) Anatoly Sergeyeovich Vilitkevich, born 15 September 1986 – arrested on 10 April 2018; detained on 12 April 2018 and released on appeal on 21 June 2018; unknown when house arrest due to end; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; added to Rosfinmonitoring List on unknown date

Orenburg

2) Vladislav Sergeyeovich Kolbanov, born 27 November 1992 – arrested on 16 May 2018; put under house arrest on 19 May 2018, until 14 July 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.3, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Perm

3) Aleksandr Vasilyevich Solovyov, born 13 February 1970 – arrested on 22 May 2018; put under house arrest on 24 May 2018, until 22 July 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

--- 27 under Travel Restrictions

Belgorod

1) Anatoly Aleksandrovich Shalyapin, born 21 January 1994 – arrested on 7 February 2018; released under travel restrictions on 10 February 2018; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Ivanovo – Shuya

2) Aleksey A., date of birth unknown – arrested 26 June 2018, unknown if detained for 48 hours; put under travel restrictions on

unknown date; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; unknown if on Rosfinmonitoring List

3) Yelena Valentinovna Mikhailova, born 9 August 1983 – arrested 29 May 2018 but not detained; put under travel restrictions on 22 June 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2 and Criminal Code Article 282.3, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

4) Svetlana P., date of birth unknown – arrested on 26 June 2018, unknown if detained for 48 hours; put under travel restrictions on unknown date; unknown if charged or still suspect, under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1 and Criminal Code Article 282.3, Part 1; unknown if on Rosfinmonitoring List

5) Svetlana Yuryevna Shishina, born 16 November 1975– arrested 29 May 2018 but not detained; put under travel restrictions on 22 June 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2 and Criminal Code Article 282.3, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Jewish Autonomous Region – Birobidzhan

6) Alam Abdulaziz ogly Aliyev, born 14 January 1963 – arrested on 17 May 2018; detained on 18 May but released on appeal on 25 May and placed under travel restrictions; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1

Kabardino-Balkariya – Maysky

7) Yury Viktorovich Zalipayev, born 8 October 1962 – case opened in August 2017; put under travel restrictions on 24 April 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 280, Part 1 and Criminal Code Article 282, Part 1 and due in court on 16 July 2018; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Kabardino-Balkariya – Prokhladny

8) Arkadya Akopovich Akopyan, born 28 May 1948 – put under travel restrictions on 3 May 2017; currently on trial under Criminal Code Article 282, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Orenburg

9) Pavel Aleksandrovich Lekontsev, born 5 July 1981 – arrested 16 May 2018 but not detained; put under travel restrictions on 16 May 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

10) Sergey Viktorovich Logunov, born 28 November 1962 – arrested 16 May 2018 but not detained; put under travel restrictions on 16 May 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

11) Aleksey Nikolayevich Matveyev, born 23 April 1983 – arrested 16 May 2018 but not detained; put under travel restrictions on 16 May 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

12) Olga Timofeyevna Sandu, born 31 March 1984 – arrested 16 May 2018 but not detained; put under travel restrictions on 16 May 2018 but has since left Russia; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

13) Fail Samigulloevich Shangareyev, born 16 December 1960 – arrested 16 May 2018 but not detained; put under travel restrictions on 16 May 2018 but has since left Russia; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

14) Nikolay Nikolayevich Zhugin, born 14 February 1976 – arrested 16 May 2018 but not detained; put under travel restrictions on 16 May 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Oryol

15) Sergei Vladimirovich Skrynnikov, born 30 October 1962 – arrested 25 May 2017 but not detained beyond 48 hours; put under travel restrictions on 13 March 2018; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; added to Rosfinmonitoring List on 27 March 2018

Vladivostok, Primorye

16) Nailya Sunatovna Kogay, born 5 October 1951 – arrested on 19 April 2018; put under travel restrictions on 19 April; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2

17) Lyubov Aleksandrovna Galaktionova, born 1947 – arrested on 19 April 2018; put under travel restrictions on 19 April; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2

18) Nina Ivanovna Purge, born 19 June 1940 – arrested on 19 April 2018; put under travel restrictions on 19 April; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2

19) Raisa Mikhailovna Usanova, born 28 September 1947 – arrested on 19 April 2018; put under travel restrictions on 19 April; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2

20) Yelena Viktorovna Zayshchuk, born 25 August 1934 – arrested on 19 April 2018; put under travel restrictions on 19 April; charged under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2

Pskov

21) Gennady Valerianovich Shpakovsky, born 6 October 1958 – arrested on 3 June 2018; put under travel restrictions on unknown date; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; added to Rosfinmonitoring List on 6 July 2018

Sakha-Yakutiya – Lensk

22) Igor Nikolayevich Ivashin, born 16 April 1976 – arrested on 30 June or 1 July 2018; put under travel restrictions on 2 July; suspect under unknown Article; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Saratov

23) Gennady Vasilyevich German, born 12 June 1969 – arrested on 12 June 2018 but not detained beyond 48 hours; put under travel restrictions on 14 June 2018; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

24) Roman Aleksandrovich Gridasov, born 16 September 1978 – arrested on 12 June 2018 but not detained beyond 48 hours; put under travel restrictions on 14 June 2018; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

25) Aleksey Petrovich Miretsky, born 14 December 1975 – arrested on 12 June 2018 but not detained beyond 48 hours; put under travel restrictions on 14 June 2018; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 1; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

Tatarstan – Naberezhnyye Chelny

26) Zinaida Viktorovna Soldatova, born 2 April 1967 – arrested on 27 March 2018 but not detained; put under travel restrictions on 12 June 2018; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Parts 1, 1.1, and 2

27) Valentina Ivanovna Stepkina, born 18 January 1951 – arrested on 27 March 2018 but not detained; put under travel restrictions on 6 June 2018; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Parts 1, 1.1, and 2

--- 1 under no known restrictions

Belgorod

1) Sergey Aleksandrovich Voykov, born 28 August 1975 – arrested on 7 February 2018; released under travel restrictions on 10 February 2018, which later lapsed; suspect under Criminal Code Article 282.2, Part 2; not on Rosfinmonitoring List

(END)

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

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

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

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

A compilation of Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) freedom of religion or belief commitments can be

found at http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=1351.

A printer-friendly map of Russia is available at <http://nationalgeographic.org/education/mapping/outline-map/?map=Russia>.

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