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RUSSIA: 100 known "missionary activity" prosecutions in 2019 – list

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

Forum 18 has found 100 prosecutions in all of 2019 (15 of organisations and 85 of individuals) for violating Russia's July 2016 Administrative Code Article 5.26, Parts 4 and 5, which punish "illegal missionary activity". 76 of the 2019 prosecutions resulted in initial convictions, almost all being punished with fines. 2019 saw a conviction rate of 89 per cent. Eight foreigners were ordered deported.

In the calendar year 2019, there were at least 100 prosecutions across Russia under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 4 ("Russians conducting missionary activity") and Part 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity"), according to Forum 18's analysis of available court records.

Overall, this is roughly similar to 2018, when there were 105 such known cases (http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2474), but 2019 and the first half of 2020 have seen a shift towards more prosecutions for Muslim religious activities, and the first known prosecutions of Catholic and Methodist individuals and organisations (http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2593).

Of the 100 cases known to have reached court in 2019, 15 involved organisations and 85 individuals. Seventy-six resulted in conviction and nine in acquittal, while judges closed or sent back 15 cases. 2019 therefore saw a conviction rate (for those cases which reached a verdict) of 89.4 per cent. All those convicted received fines (except for one Muslim community which was given a warning), though a few of these were later overturned on appeal.

Of the 15 foreigners charged under Article 5.26, Part 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity"), eight were ordered deported (three by means of enforced expulsion, meaning that they were sent to Interior Ministry detention centres for foreign nationals before departure).

(See here (http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2595) for a full list of the 42 known prosecutions in the first half of 2020, based on court decisions and other information.)

Russia has also imposed its "anti-missionary" legislation in Crimea, which it annexed in 2014. At least 24 prosecutions under Article 5.26, Part 4 are known to have been launched in 2019, of which 17 ended with punishment (http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2544).

These prosecutions are based on amendments to the Administrative Code and Religion Law introduced in July 2016 as part of the "Yarovaya" package of "anti-terrorism" laws (http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2246).

Religious organisations also continue to face prosecution under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 3 (http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2246) ("Implementation of activities by a religious organisation without indicating its official full name, including the issuing or distribution, within the framework of missionary activity, of literature and printed, audio, and video material without a label bearing this name, or with an incomplete or deliberately false label"). Prosecutions continue against religious organisations, as well as individuals (despite this not being legal), for not showing their full official names on literature, online, and most frequently on buildings. From the beginning of January 2019 to the end of June 2020, 76 registered religious organisations and 22 individuals were prosecuted. Most resulted in guilty verdicts and fines, and the largest increase in the number of prosecutions by religious community was of Muslims. The conviction rate was 72.5 per cent. A Constitutional Court appeal may clarify the law (http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2610) on how and where names should be displayed.

List of known 2019 prosecutions

All prosecutions under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 4 ("Russians conducting missionary activity") and Part 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity") known to have reached court in the calendar year 2019 are listed below, ordered by date of court

hearing. The list is based on court decisions and court records seen by Forum 18, and other information.

A fine of 50,000 Roubles (6,100 Norwegian Kroner, 575 Euros or 675 US Dollars) represents nearly six weeks' average wages for those in work or 16 weeks' average state retirement pension.

1) 10 January 2019

Name: Iman Local Muslim Religious Organisation

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Balashikha Magistrate's Court No. 6, Moscow Region

Circumstances: after prosecutor's office inspection of premises, Muslim organisation charged for holding prayers on the grounds of a block of flats without any formal right to the land, and with the use of amplification equipment; community representative denied using amplification, stated that prayers were held indoors, and argued that photos presented as evidence show people praying in the wrong direction; evidence for use of outside space appears to be only the presence of loudspeakers (not in use at time of inspection) and the painting of railings in the organisation's colours; judge concludes there is no evidence of any offence

Appeal: by prosecutor, unsuccessful – 14 March 2019, Balashikha City Court, Moscow Region

2) 11 January 2019

Name: Gabdukhay Saytkhuzhin

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Kunashak District Magistrate's Court No. 2, Chelyabinsk Region

Circumstances: Muslim charged for discussing religion and the Koran, teaching Arabic, and leading Islamic rites and celebrations by invitation of village residents; defendant officially employed as teacher by Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Asiatic Russia and has authorisation from local religious group to conduct missionary and educational activity and act as imam; judge concludes that there is no evidence that defendant disseminated any information about his beliefs among non-Muslims

Appeal: by prosecutor, unsuccessful – 1 March 2019, Kunashak District Court, Chelyabinsk Region

3) 14 January 2019

Name: Rishat Sabitov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Tractor Factory District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Chelyabinsk

Circumstances: after police search and prosecutor's office inspection, Muslim charged for "organising a group professing Islam" without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group, and without authorisation from the group to carry out missionary activity, ie. prayers, Arabic teaching, and the study of Islam, in a rented residential property, "among persons who are not members of this group, in order to involve them in the membership of this group" – appeal acknowledges "defining feature" of missionary activity and concludes that there is no evidence of this in defendant's actions, as the only people present during the inspection were all also Muslims and testified that they were there voluntarily

Appeal: successful (lack of evidence) – 19 April 2019, Tractor Factory District Court, Chelyabinsk

4) 15 January 2019

Name: Sergey Roshchin

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Soviet District Magistrate's Court No. 21, Ryazan

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist charged by police for handing out religious literature, including newspaper "Do you believe?" and "The most important truths", at a bus stop, without authorisation from a religious group to carry out missionary

activity on its behalf or evidence of notification of the existence of a religious group

Appeal: unsuccessful – 6 March 2019, Soviet District Court, Ryazan

5) 15 January 2019

Name: Valery Turkin

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Soviet District Magistrate's Court No. 21, Ryazan

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist charged by police for handing out religious literature, including newspaper "Do you believe?" and "The most important truths", at a bus stop, without authorisation from a religious group to carry out missionary activity on its behalf or evidence of notification of the existence of a religious group

Appeal: unsuccessful – 6 March 2019, Soviet District Court, Ryazan

6) 21 January 2019

Name: T.V. Kulichenko

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Miass Magistrate's Court No. 9, Chelyabinsk Region

Circumstances: Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged for speaking to an audience at a yoga studio and chanting mantras, "aimed at disseminating information about his faith, Krishnaism (Vaishnavism), among persons who are not participants in this religious group, in order to involve them in the group's membership" – without authorisation from a religious group to carry out missionary activity and without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group; defence argued that defendant did have written authorisation; judge notes Constitutional Court's March 2018 description of "defining feature" of missionary activity and concluded that there was no evidence that defendant was seeking to involve people in a religious group: "In itself, the holding of a religious event, in the opinion of the court, does not indicate that the organisers are pursuing the goal of involving those present in the composition of any religious association"

Appeal: by prosecutor, unsuccessful – 15 March 2019, Miass City Court, Chelyabinsk Region

7) 1 February 2019

Name: Shamil Karagishev

Punishment: none – returned to police because of technical errors and not resubmitted

Court: Verkhnebureinsky District Magistrate's Court No. 75, Khabarovsk Region

Circumstances: Muslim imam charged for "the implementation of missionary activity without state registration"; judge points out that police did not include in their report any details of the missionary activity or any reference to a law which required such "state registration", given that defendant is an officially appointed imam of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Far East; judge also refers to Constitutional Court definition

Appeal: none

8) 7 February 2019

Name: Igor Darayev

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Khostinsky Magistrate's Court No. 99, Sochi, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: leader of local Buddhist religious group charged for organising "collective meditation" in a boathouse for "about a dozen" fellow Buddhists, without written authorisation from a religious association to carry out missionary activity; case brought by prosecutor's office on basis of report from FSB security service.

Appeal: none

9) 20 February 2019

Part 5

Name: Donald Dean Turner

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles plus deportation ("monitored independent departure")

Court: Soviet District Court, Bryansk

Circumstances: American citizen and director of Global Focus charged for speaking, singing hymns, and answering parishioners questions at a New Life church service, without authorisation from a religious organisation – prosecutor's office (and consequently, FSB) tipped off by a woman who attended the service but said she was not a member of the church, who considers that defendant's "actions are illegal on the territory of the Russian Federation" and a man who claimed he was a church volunteer, who asked prosecutors "to verify the legality of the practice of social and religious activity by foreign citizens on the territory of the region"

Appeal: rejected without consideration – 22 March 2019 and 25 June 2019 (appeal period expired), Bryansk Regional Court; against first rejection, unsuccessful – 23 May 2019, Supreme Court of the Russian Federation

10) 1 March 2019

Part 5

Name: Abdukhamid Gafforov

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles plus deportation (enforced expulsion)

Court: Verkhny Ufaley City Court, Chelyabinsk Region

Circumstances: Tajik citizen charged for leading Friday prayers in a "single-storey, non-residential building, which is used as a mosque, but [for which] documents are absent", without authorisation from the Regional Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Chelyabinsk Region; city prosecutor's office inspection carried out on basis of information from the FSB security service; "forced" deportation imposed because of lack of means; defendant held in temporary detention centre until deportation

Appeal: none

11) 4 March 2019

Name: Bilyar Medrese

Punishment: 50,000 Roubles

Court: Zavolzhsky District Magistrate's Court No. 4, Ulyanovsk

Circumstances: after Justice Ministry inspection, Muslim educational institution charged for "carrying out its activities in [its rented] building with any agreements or documents giving the right to conduct missionary activity"; chairman agreed that there was no lease at the time of inspection, because it had expired and a new head of the medrese had been recently appointed; new lease obtained immediately after inspection; judge notes that "missionary activity" is mentioned in the medrese's constitution (this may be carried out by a religious organisation on its own premises, including rented premises, but lack of lease means right to property cannot be proven); fine reduced as violation now eliminated

Appeal: unsuccessful – 15 May 2019, Zavolzhsky District Court, Ulyanovsk; supervisory, unsuccessful – 5 August 2019, Ulyanovsk Regional Court

12) 13 March 2019

Name: A.I. Yershov

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Moscow District Magistrate's Court No. 5, Cheboksary, Chuvash Republic

Circumstances: Protestant charged for carrying out unspecified missionary activity without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group – judge sends case back to police because the case file contains no documents showing that defendant is the leader of any group and no evidence of the group's activities, and because the protocol was drawn up without defendant's participation

Appeal: none

13) 15 March 2019

Part 5

Name: Kole Brodowski

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles plus deportation (enforced expulsion)

Court: Gulkevichi District Court, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: American missionary from Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) charged by police (with David Gaag – below) for handing out booklets and talking to people about their religion in the street, without authorisation from a religious organisation or group; defendant denies handing out literature, saying he knew it was not allowed; defendant to be held in a temporary detention centre for foreign citizens until departure

Appeal: none

14) 15 March 2019

Part 5

Name: David Gaag

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles plus deportation (enforced expulsion)

Court: Gulkevichi District Court, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: American missionary from Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) charged by police (with Kole Brodowski – above) for handing out booklets and talking to people about their religion in the street, without authorisation from a religious organisation or group; defendant denies handing out literature, saying he knew it was not allowed; defendant to be held in a temporary detention centre for foreign citizens until departure

Appeal: none

15) 25 March 2019

Part 5

Name: Roman Ivanko

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles without deportation

Court: Yoshkar-Ola City Court, Mari-El Republic

Circumstances: Ukrainian citizen and Protestant musician charged for singing Christian songs of his own composition without written authorisation from a religious organisation; defence argued that this took place only at a gathering of friends and defendant is not a representative of a religious organisation; two witnesses who are not parishioners stated how they had learned on the VKontakte social network about the event, which was billed as a free concert, and attested that the defendant talked about becoming a believer and sang songs "with a religious motivation"; judge concludes that "the nature of Ivanko's performance, before an unlimited circle of people, with free access of citizens to the premises, is evidence that he was disseminating information about his beliefs among people who are not members of this religious association

Appeal: none

16) 25 March 2019

Name: Yusupzhon Sheykhov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Volgodonsk District Magistrate's Court No. 9, Rostov Region

Circumstances: same case as Aslanov (see below); member of Local Religious Organisation of Muslims of Volgodonsk District charged for "carrying out missionary activity in violation of the requirements of [the Religion Law], by means of the use of residential premises for performing the service of Friday prayers", ie. praying with others in his home without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group; defendant pointed out that other attendees were "his relatives and friends who had professed Islam from childhood, [and] people of other faiths and atheists do not come to these services"; case brought by police

Appeal: unsuccessful – 25 April 2019, Volgodonsk District Court; supervisory, unsuccessful – 2 August 2019, Rostov Regional Court

17) 26 March 2019

Name: Yusup Aslanov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Volgodonsk District Magistrate's Court No. 8, Rostov Region

Circumstances: same case as Sheykhov (see above); chair of Local Religious Organisation of Muslims of Volgodonsk District charged for conducting prayers on residential premises, without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group, and without authorisation from any religious group or organisation; case brought by police; defendant argued that only Muslims were present and people of others faiths were not involved; judge notes that worship services may be held on residential premises, but these premises may only be provided by members of an (officially constituted) religious group

Appeal: unsuccessful – 15 May 2019, Volgodonsk City Court, Rostov Region

18) 28 March 2019

Name: S.M. Pautov

Punishment: unknown

Court: Magistrate's Court No. 64, Vologda Region

Circumstances: Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged for advertising the sale of religious literature with a banner in the street (ie. in a place where missionary activity is not provided for by law) and online; defendant had written authorisation from his religious group to carry out missionary activity, but did not indicate this during questioning

Appeal: unsuccessful – 10 June 2019, Cherepovets City Court, Vologda Region; supervisory, unsuccessful – 14 August 2019, Vologda Regional Court

19) 29 March 2019

Name: Oleg Sidletsky

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles (but acquitted on appeal)

Court: Novoilinsky District Magistrate's Court No.1, Novokuznetsk, Kemerovo Region

Circumstances: leader of Light to the World Pentecostal religious group charged for holding a service in a rented cafe, rather than at the address indicated in the group's notification submitted to the Justice Ministry; appeal judge notes March 2018 Constitutional Court definition and concludes that no evidence of missionary activity was presented

Appeal: supervisory, successful – 25 November 2019, Kemerovo Regional Court

20) 5 April 2019

Name: Sergey Lemeshkov

Punishment: none – sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Satka and Satka District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Ulyanovsk Region

Circumstances: Pentecostal pastor – details unknown

Appeal: none

21) 8 April 2019

Name: Yevgeny Olkov

Punishment: none – case closed for unknown reasons

Court: Gorno-Altaysk Magistrate's Court No. 2, Altay Republic

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist – details unknown

Appeal: none

22) 15 April 2019

Part 5

Name: Maksim Tashenov

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles plus deportation (monitored independent departure)

Court: Bezhitsky District Court, Bryansk

Circumstances: Kazakh citizen and leader of New Life Protestant Church (Aktau, Kazakhstan) charged for preaching (about recovering from illness "with the help of the word of God"), singing religious songs, and answering congregation's questions at a service at the Awakening Protestant Church, to which he had been invited, without written authorisation from a religious group or organisation to carry out missionary activity; person present at the service later made statement to the police that she had learned of the service online and was not a member of the church, and that defendant spoke of rejecting medical treatment – asked whether "engagement in public and religious activities on the territory of the Russian Federation" is legal; defendant was in Russia to attend a conference and had a commercial visa

Appeal: unsuccessful – 17 May 2019, Bryansk Regional Court

23) 23 April 2019

Name: Nur Local Muslim Organisation

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Dimitrovgrad District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Ulyanovsk Region

Circumstances: unknown

Appeal: by police, rejected without consideration – 30 July 2019, Dimitrovgrad City Court, Ulyanovsk Region

24) 24 April 2019

Name: Rasul Abbasov

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Salsk District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Rostov Region

Circumstances: chair of Local Religious Organisation of Muslims of Sandata village – details unknown

Appeal: none

25) 24 April 2019

Name: Dmitry Knyazev

Punishment: 10,000 Roubles

Court: Lenin District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Novosibirsk

Circumstances: leader of Hare Krishna religious group charged for distributing religious literature at a bus stop during a religious procession of about 15 people, which also involved chanting mantras and handing out food – defendant admitted this but argued that there was no intention of involving non-members in the group; case brought by prosecutor on the basis of information from the FSB security service; judge cites Constitutional Court definition; witness took book for 200 Roubles, then gave it voluntarily to FSB (unclear who instigated this); expert witness concluded that distribution of the book "is an element of missionary activity in the sense of disseminating information about their beliefs among non-members of the Gaudiya Vaishnava religious association"; judge concludes that defendant's actions constituted missionary activity because of "the form and content of the event, its public nature, [and] the attracting of the attention of an unlimited number of citizens confirm the presence of [this] goal".

Appeal: unsuccessful – 19 June 2019, Lenin District Court, Novosibirsk; supervisory, unsuccessful – 31 July 2019, Novosibirsk Regional Court

26) 29 April 2019

Name: Ancestors' Legacy Cultural and Educational Centre of the Caucasian Peoples

Punishment: 100,000 Roubles

Court: Primorsky District Magistrate's Court No. 167, St Petersburg

Circumstances: cultural centre charged because its director led Muslim prayers on its premises (rented by him from building owner, sublet to centre) without authorisation from a religious group to perform missionary activity or notification of the existence of a religious group; case brought after police inspection triggered by complaint to prosecutor's office that "a group of people of Caucasian ethnicities was regularly holding gatherings and using the premises for missionary activity"

Appeal: partially successful – closed as statute of limitations expired, 1 July 2019, Primorsky District Court, St Petersburg; by prosecution, rejected without consideration – 14 August 2019, St Petersburg City Court

27) 30 April 2019

Name: Yelena Karpunina

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Uchaly District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Republic of Bashkortostan

Circumstances: member of Seventh-day Adventist religious group charged for performing "missionary activity", ie. hosting a service in her flat in the presence of non-members without submitting notification of the group's existence, without authorisation from the group itself, and on residential premises (which had also not been noted as location of services in submission of notification); witness statement from sufferer of alcoholism whom defendant invited to services; case brought by prosecutor's office after operative of Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism found the religious group's website

Appeal: none

28) 14 May 2019

Name: D.D. Kanke

Punishment: none – case closed for unknown reasons

Court: Gorno-Altaysk Magistrate's Court No. 2, Altay Republic

Circumstances: unknown

Appeal: none

29) 15 May 2019

Name: Methodist Church, stantsiya Ugolnaya

Punishment: 100,000 Roubles

Court: Soviet District Magistrate's Court No. 24, Vladivostok, Primorye Region

Circumstances: church charged for holding Far Eastern Conference for Children's Ministers, organised by Methodists and local Transfiguration Baptist Union church, at a sanatorium, involving members of other religious organisations; church had no lease for use of the building, only an oral agreement, therefore could not be said to be conducting missionary activity on its "own" property; prosecutor's office found event advertised online and informed Justice Ministry, leading to police inspection; verdict simultaneously notes that access was "free and open to all" and that online registration was required – but that anyone could register; list of participants included people who were members of different churches and people who had not specified their religious affiliation

Appeal: unsuccessful – 24 June 2019, Soviet District Court, Vladivostok; supervisory, unsuccessful – 21 November 2019, Primorye Regional Court

30) 17 May 2019

Name: Yevgeny Olkov

Punishment: unknown if any imposed

Court: Gorno-Altaysk Magistrate's Court No. 2, Altay Republic

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist – details unknown

Appeal: none

31) 17 May 2019

Name: Barakyat Local Muslim Religious Organisation

Punishment: 50,000 Roubles

Court: Zasviyazhsky District Magistrate's Court No. 9, Ulyanovsk

Circumstances: Muslim community (part of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Ulyanovsk Region) charged for carrying out missionary activity on land belonging to another religious association – the Regional Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Ulyanovsk Region – without its written permission; community representative pointed out that the organisations are identical in their religious beliefs; nature of activity and relationship between organisations unclear

Appeal: unsuccessful – 29 July 2019, Zasviyazhsky District Court, Ulyanovsk; supervisory, unsuccessful – 25 October 2019, Ulyanovsk Regional Court

32) 22 May 2019

Name: Konstantin Panteleyev

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: October District Magistrate's Court No. 248, Novorossiysk, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: same case as Shcherbakov (see below); Protestant charged for talking to people at a bus station about God, Easter, and the Gospel, advising them to believe in Jesus Christ, and offering them religious literature; defendant claimed to have "certification" from the centralised religious organisation, the Association of Evangelical Christians (unclear if this is authorisation for missionary activity)

Appeal: rejected without consideration – 8 August 2019, October District Court, Novorossiysk, Krasnodar Region

33) 22 May 2019

Name: Aleksey Shcherbakov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: October District Magistrate's Court No. 248, Novorossiysk, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: same case as Panteleyev (see above); Protestant charged for talking to people at a bus station about God, Easter, and the Gospel, advising them to believe in Jesus Christ, and offering them religious literature; defendant claimed to have "certification" from the centralised religious organisation, the Association of Evangelical Christians (unclear if this is authorisation for missionary activity)

Appeal: unsuccessful – 16 July 2019, October District Court, Novorossiysk, Krasnodar Region

34) 28 May 2019

Name: Mushfig Sheydayev

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Vyborg District Magistrate's Court No. 24, Leningrad Region

Circumstances: after prosecutor's office inspection based on information received by FSB security service, general director of food processing company charged for permitting Muslim worship in a prayer room on company premises, without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group

Appeal: none

35) 30 May 2019

Part 5

Name: Kurbonali Kakhorov

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Frunze District Court, St Petersburg

Circumstances: Tajik citizen charged for carrying out "[Islamic] prayers in the presence of parishioners" in a trailer equipped as a prayer room at a construction site, while "not being a mullah (imam) of a Muslim mosque, [and] officially not part of a religious organisation", and without either authorisation from a religious group or having submitted notification of the existence of a religious group; judge concluded that defendant "did not engage in missionary activity (he did not disseminate information about religious doctrine, [and] did not get anyone to join any religious association".

Appeal: none

36) 7 June 2019

Name: Roman Tulyupa

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Salekhard Magistrate's Court No. 2, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Region

Circumstances: leader of unregistered Council of Churches Baptist religious group charged for holding services in his house, with a notice on the door inviting people to worship at particular times; defendant argues that worship on residential premises is permitted, and that he was not present at the service in question, at which two women whom nobody knew and nobody had invited claim that they were given religious tracts and hymn books (the women testified that they had been invited to the service by a woman one of the had met in the street)

Appeal: case closed as statute of limitations expired before appeal – 11 July 2019, Salekhard City Court, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Region; supervisory, by police – proceedings halted as appeal lodged by wrong official, 28 October 2019, Court of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Region

37) 7 June 2019

Name: I.D. Osmanov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Vyborg District Magistrate's Court No. 20, Leningrad Region

Circumstances: after prosecutor's office inspection of rented (non-residential) prayer room, Muslim charged for holding prayers and "religious conversations" without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group

Appeal: none

38) 11 June 2019

Name: Aleksandr Sevastyanov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: October District Magistrate's Court No. 5, Murmansk

Circumstances: Protestant (House of the Potter Church) charged for holding "religious events to disseminate information about the beliefs and work of the religious movement among both persons who were and those who were not participants in (members, followers of) the religious association, in order to involve [new] participants" – while not having authorisation from a religious group or organisation to perform missionary activity on its behalf and not officially being a leader, and without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group; investigation also found church members distributed invitations to thrice-weekly services via neighbours' postboxes; case brought after prosecutor's office inspection based on apparent surveillance by FSB security service and Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism

Appeal: unsuccessful – 21 November 2019, October District Court, Murmansk

39) 11 June 2019

Name: Yury Besedin

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Pribaykalsk District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Republic of Buryatiya

Circumstances: leader of Protestant religious group charged because group was "not registered in the automated system of registration of non-commercial and religious organisations" – activities included meeting in a flat with 4-5 people, conversations about religion, and distribution of religious literature; defendant pointed out that group not registered because he had not intended to create religious organisation; judge acknowledges Constitutional Court definition, but notes that "The actions of citizens and legal entities that meet the normatively established signs of missionary activity and are carried out on behalf of a religious group that has not notified the authorised body of the start (continuation) of its activity in the manner prescribed by law, may, subject to other necessary conditions, fall under Article 5.26, Part 4".

Appeal: none

40) 11 June 2019

Name: Artur Rusyayev

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Chernyakhovsk District Magistrate's Court No. 2, Kaliningrad Region

Circumstances: Muslim charged for holding Friday prayers in a non-residential building on his wife's land

(http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2508); formal agreement of free use drawn up with Muslim religious organisation; judge concludes that police made changes to the protocol without defendant's knowledge (adding information about location of alleged offence) and that local police were "not authorised to exercise functions in the sphere of control (supervision) over the activities of religious organisations"

Appeal: none

41) 11 June 2019

Name: O.M. Alekseyev

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Sterlitamak Magistrate's Court No. 2, Republic of Bashkortostan

Circumstances: Baptist charged for conducting services in his home, ie. carrying out missionary activity on residential premises; unclear which agency initiated case or how it learned of defendant's activities

Appeal: none

42) 14 June 2019

Name: Yury Korniyenko

Punishment: 10,000 Roubles

Court: Novorossiysk Magistrate's Court No. 79, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: Baptist Union pastor charged for leading service in church building after local authorities had obtained a court order barring the congregation (religious group) from using it (http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2505)

Appeal: unsuccessful – 23 July 2019, Primorsky District Court, Novorossiysk, Krasnodar Region

43) 19 June 2019

Name: Yoshkar-Ola Christian Centre Protestant Church

Punishment: 50,000 Roubles

Court: Yoshkar-Ola Magistrate's Court No. 6, Mari El Republic

Circumstances: same case as Ivanko (above); Protestant church charged because a visitor (Ukrainian citizen also prosecuted under Part 5) performed religious songs and spoke in the church's own building, without written authorisation from the religious organisation; appeal based on March 2018 Constitutional Court definition; two witnesses testified that they were not members of the church and had attended the performance after seeing it advertised online

Appeal: unsuccessful – 15 August 2019, Yoshkar-Ola City Court, Mari El Republic

44) 20 June 2019

Name: Pyotr Zhuk

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Lenin District Magistrate's Court No. 5, Ufa, Republic of Bashkortostan

Circumstances: pastor of Baptist Union Holy Trinity Church charged for holding services and other religious events on the third floor of his house (ie. on residential premises) under an agreement of free use with his church; third floor contains hall with benches, lectern, religious literature, etc.; "There is free access to the residential building and [the hall], where, on an ongoing basis, with the participation of parishioners and other interested persons, various religious events are held, where information about their faith is disseminated, including among persons who are not participants (members, followers) in this religious association – that is, missionary activity is carried out"; verdict also notes advertising online and on VKontakte

Appeal: none

45) 24 June 2019

Name: Mukhiddin Khasanov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Salsk District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Rostov Region

Circumstances: Muslim imam (member of Local Religious Organisation of Muslims of Salsk District) charged for "conducting collective prayer and preaching, aimed at the dissemination of information about his beliefs (Islam), among people who are not participants in (members of) any Muslim religious organisation or group registered on the territory of Salsk and Salsk District", without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group; defendant is not a member of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Rostov Region and carried out "missionary activity" without written authorisation

Appeal: none

46) 24 June 2019

Name: Arslan Abbasov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Salsk District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Rostov Region

Circumstances: Muslim (chairman of Local Religious Organisation of Muslims of Berezovka Village) charged for "conducting collective prayer and preaching, aimed at the dissemination of information about his beliefs (Islam), among people who are not participants in (members of) any Muslim religious organisation or group registered on the territory of Salsk and Salsk District", without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group; defendant is not a member of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Rostov Region and carried out "missionary activity" without written authorisation

Appeal: none

47) 28 June 2019

Name: Konstantin Petrenko

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Beloretsk Magistrate's Court No. 3, Republic of Bashkortostan

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist pastor charged for talking about "the need to attract new followers to the ranks of the church in order to spread the religion among non-believers, with the aim of involving them as participants in the religious community (members, followers)" and "disseminating information about religion of Evangelical Christian-Baptists, thereby carrying out missionary work in violation of the requirements of [the Religion Law]", ie. on residential premises and without having submitted notification of the existence of a religious group; one witness statement cited evidence of "involvement in [Petrenko's] group of persons who are not participants in this religious association" – woman who learned about Petrenko's sermon in a newspaper she had been given in the square (of the town) and attended the church after her mother's funeral; Petrenko not present when investigators went to church (on basis of call made to police), none of the congregation gave testimony, and investigators used map.drevolife.ru website to find out what the church was and who its pastor is, and drew up the protocol on that basis; verdict notes that "The church is open to all comers [and] is freely accessible, participants are offered religious literature".

Appeal: unsuccessful – 31 July 2019, Beloretsk Interdistrict Court, Republic of Bashkortostan

48) Unknown date, July 2019

Name: Valery Skvortsov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Lenin District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Novosibirsk

Circumstances: defendant of unknown religious affiliation had written authorisation from his religious group to carry out missionary activity (though documentation did not reach magistrate's court in time for hearing) and was not in a prohibited location; defendant did not attend original hearing as had not received the SMS informing him of the time and date – notification in this way may only be used with the defendant's agreement and should be followed up if confirmation of receipt not received – appeal judge overturns ruling on grounds that magistrate did not "did not create the necessary conditions to ensure the procedural guarantees of the rights of the defendant" and violated his right to a fair trial; statute of limitation also expired by time of appeal

Appeal: successful – 20 September 2019, Lenin District Court, Novosibirsk

49) 4 July 2019

Part 5

Name: Abdusamad Mirzoyev

Punishment: none – returned for technical reasons

Court: Nerchinsk District Court, Transbaykal Region

Circumstances: unknown religious affiliation, unknown citizenship – charged for performing unspecified "missionary activity" without authorising documents from a religious organisation

Appeal: none

50) 9 July 2019

Name: Islam Salikhov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Gatchina District Magistrate's Court No. 29 / 30, Leningrad Region

Circumstances: imam of Dagestan Cultural and Educational Centre charged for holding services and doing outreach work, interpreted as "missionary activity", without having notified the local Justice Ministry of the existence of a religious group; inspection by prosecutor's office staff, police, and officers of the Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism (after call from member of the public) found about 60 people attending prayers; premises provided to centralised Muslim religious organisation (St Petersburg and Leningrad Region Muftiyat) for use as a cultural and education centre and for religious worship – defendant said during questioning that he did not belong to the centre but carried out its activities on behalf of the Muftiyat, and undertook to submit documents confirming this affiliation; witnesses confirmed "the implementation by I.G. Salikhov of religious activities using special paraphernalia, namely a headdress and a robe"

Appeal: unsuccessful – 25 October 2019, Gatchina City Court, Leningrad Region

51) 23 July 2019

Name: Amor Otman

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Krasnoselsky District Magistrate's Court No. 102, St Petersburg

Circumstances: unknown

Appeal: none

52) Unknown date, August 2019

Name: Local Religious Organisation of Muslims of Khimki

Punishment: 100,000 Roubles

Court: Khimki District Magistrate's Court No. 264, Moscow Region

Circumstances: after prosecutor's office inspection of compliance with Religion Law, Muslim community charged for carrying out "missionary activity" on premises (cultural centre) which it had no formal right to use and which was open to all, including non-members of the religious organisation – local administration had granted free use of part of the cultural centre, but not of a corridor and certain rooms used for worship at time of inspection

Appeal: unsuccessful – 26 November 2019, Khimki City Court, Moscow Region

53) 1 August 2019

Name: Valery Turkin

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Moscow District Magistrate's Court No. 10, Ryazan

Circumstances: same case as Roshchin – see below; Council of Churches Baptist charged for distributing the newspaper "Do you believe?", prayer cards with the Lord's Prayer, and copies of the New Testament and Psalms to passers-by in the street, and issuing invitations to services – without authorisation from a religious group/organisation or submitting notification of the existence of a religious group – judge returns case to police as they did not describe the alleged offence fully in their report

Appeal: none

54) 1 August 2019

Name: Sergey Roshchin

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Moscow District Magistrate's Court No. 10, Ryazan

Circumstances: same case as Turkin – see above; Council of Churches Baptist charged for distributing the newspaper "Do you believe?", prayer cards with the Lord's Prayer, and copies of the New Testament and Psalms to passers-by in the street, and issuing invitations to services – without authorisation from a religious group/organisation or submitting notification of the existence of a religious group – judge returns case to police as they did not describe the alleged offence fully in their report

Appeal: none

55) 6 August 2019

Name: Vitaly Kolesnichenko

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Yegoryevsk District Magistrate's Court No. 43, Moscow Region

Circumstances: director of the Time for a Change rehabilitation centre (for disabled people, homeless children, "problem youth", drug addicts, alcoholics, ex-prisoners) charged for holding services and reading religious literature and preaching to residents, without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group; court decided that rehab centre is "cell" of the Protestant Holy Trinity Church, and defendant is its leader; former resident turned volunteer testified that he had adopted a different religion after undergoing rehab there

Appeal: unsuccessful – 3 March 2020, Yegoryevsk City Court, Moscow Region

56) 8 August 2019

Name: Maksim Zelenchenkov

Punishment: none – statute of limitations expired

Court: Fokinsky District Magistrate's Court No. 72, Bryansk

Circumstances: Baptist Union member charged for suggesting to pupils of School of Correction and Development VIII No. 37, during a religious celebration at the school, that they go to Baptist events and prayers – without parents' permission to conduct

missionary activity

Appeal: none

57) 12 August 2019

Name: Vladimir Akulov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Oymyakon Magistrate's Court No. 24, Sakha Republic (Yakutiya)

Circumstances: Protestant charged for visiting flats to talk to people about God and salvation, discuss social questions, and give out booklets on religious themes – ie. missionary activity on residential premises; defendant stated that he was acting on his own behalf and that the booklets did not carry the name of any religious organisation; one person he visited – a local deputy – telephoned the police; defendant had written authorisation from the Union of Nehemiah Centralised Religious Organisation of Evangelical Christians

Appeal: none

58) 13 August 2019

Name: Aleksey Blashkun

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Kudymkar Magistrate's Court No. 1 / 3, Perm Region

Circumstances: after inspection by city prosecutor and inter-agency working group on countering illegal migration, terrorism, and extremist activity (based on information from FSB security service), leader of Council of Churches Baptist religious group charged for "organising the systematic carrying out of religious rituals on Sundays from 10.00am, as evidenced by a sign on the fence of the residential building, [and] the distribution of printed publications of the [Council of Churches] about his beliefs to persons who are not members of this religious association in the city", without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group

Appeal: unsuccessful – 25 September 2019, Kudymkar City Court, Perm Region

59) 14 August 2019

Name: T.M. Zayimov

Punishment: 6,000 Roubles

Court: October District Magistrate's Court No. 4, Rostov Region

Circumstances: Muslim charged for leading Friday prayers on residential premises, and without having registered a religious organisation or submitted notification of the creation of a religious group; case brought by police; defendant explained that he was in the process of preparing documents to register the community

Appeal: none

60) 19 August 2019

Name: R.Kh. Magomadov

Punishment: unknown

Court: Western City District Magistrate's Court No. 27, Krasnodar

Circumstances: unknown

Appeal: none

61) 21 August 2019

Name: Aleksey Kolomytsev

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Pervomaysky District Magistrate's Court No. 76, Omsk

Circumstances: Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged for participating in a "public event" with mantras and drumming, in a park, without written authorisation from a religious organisation or group and without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group; group leader explained that the event was a form of meditation and not intended to attract new members; two witnesses testified that they had also participated, as non-members of the group, and had only learned it was a religious group during questioning; case brought by Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism

Appeal: rejected as appeal period expired – 25 October 2019, Pervomaysky District Court, Omsk

62) 28 August 2019

Name: Pavel Strelnikov

Punishment: none – sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Lenin District Magistrate's Court No. 24, Irkutsk

Circumstances: Pentecostal pastor – details unknown

Appeal: none

63) 5 September 2019

Name: Salvation Protestant Church

Punishment: 50,000 Roubles (but case closed on re-examination)

Court: Volosovo District Magistrate's Court No. 4, Leningrad Region

Circumstances: church charged for holding service in a hall for which the rental agreement had not been concluded, in the presence of people who were not members; prosecutor's office inspection carried out on basis of anonymous phone call complaining about use of amplification at twice-weekly worship events; centralised religious organisation Association of Christian Evangelical Churches sent letter to court testifying that everyone present at the inspected service was a Protestant Christian

Appeal: sent for re-examination – 11 October 2019, Volosovo District Court, Leningrad Region; case closed on re-examination as statute of limitations had expired – 18 November 2019, Volosovo District Magistrate's Court No. 4, Leningrad Region

64) 5 September 2019

Part 5

Name: Abed Alaziz Kanj

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles plus deportation (monitored independent departure)

Court: Maykop City Court, Adygeya Republic

Circumstances: Lebanese citizen and medical student of unknown religious affiliation charged for carrying out unspecified missionary activity in a classroom at a university hostel; defendant stated that he was unaware that missionary activity was not allowed – judge pointed out that his resident permit required him to demonstrate knowledge of Russian law

Appeal: unsuccessful – 12 September 2019, Supreme Court of the Adygeya Republic; supervisory, rejected without consideration – 17 January 2020, 4th Cassational Court, Krasnodar

65) 9 September 2019

Name: F.A. Yusupov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Lenin District Magistrate's Court No. 4, Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk Region

Circumstances: Muslim charged for holding prayers in a market building without written authorisation for missionary activity from a religious organisation or group, and without submitting notification to the Justice Ministry of the existence of a religious group; that the prayer room is freely accessible and not closed at night, and is "equipped for the implementation of religious rituals" with prayer rugs, religious literature, and images of Mecca on the walls, is taken as evidence that defendant "organised the dissemination of information about[his] beliefs" among people who do not profess Islam"; witnesses confirm that "anyone of any faith" can enter the room and anyone can read the prayers

Appeal: none

66) 9 September 2019

Name: Nikolay Stasyuk

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Karasuk District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Novosibirsk Region

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist charged for handing out religious newspapers and literature (including the Bible, "Herald of Truth", and the paper "Do you believe?") from a tent in his yard, "that is, on premises not provided to a religious association by any right of property" and without having submitted notification of the existence of a religious group; defendant said he was not part of any religious association

Appeal: unsuccessful – 24 October 2019, Karasuk District Court, Novosibirsk Region

67) 9 September 2019

Part 5

Name: Dzhabrail Abiyev

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles without deportation

Court: Myski City Court, Kemerovo Region

Circumstances: same case as Abbasov and Talybov (below); Azerbaijani citizen identified by police and FSB security service as having performed "missionary activity" in a Muslim prayer house on behalf of a religious organisation "without appropriate permission or right", ie. without authorising documents from the religious organisation; not deported as being unable to be in Russia would interfere with defendant's right to a family life

Appeal: none

68) 9 September 2019

Part 5

Name: Khafiz Abbasov

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles without deportation

Court: Myski City Court, Kemerovo Region

Circumstances: same case as Abiyev (above) and Talybov (below); Azerbaijani citizen identified by police and FSB as having performed "missionary activity" in a Muslim prayer house on behalf of a religious organisation "without appropriate permission or right", ie. without authorising documents from the religious organisation; not deported as being unable to be in Russia would interfere with defendant's right to a family life

Appeal: none

69) 9 September 2019

Name: M.M. Talybov

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Myski Magistrate's Court No. 2, Kemerovo Region

Circumstances: Muslim – details unknown but likely same case as Abiyev and Abbasov (above)

Appeal: none

70) 10 September 2019

Name: Timofey Trefilov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Industrial District Magistrate's Court No. 6, Izhevsk, Udmurt Republic

Circumstances: Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged for posting video on Vkontakte of himself and a fellow believer chanting mantras

Appeal: unsuccessful – 13 January 2020, Industrial District Court, Izhevsk, Udmurt Republic

71) 16 September 2019

Name: A.S. Velengura

Punishment: unknown

Court: October District Magistrate's Court No. 248, Novorossiysk, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: unknown

Appeal: none

72) 17 September 2019

Name: Yury Degtyar

Punishment: none – statute of limitations expired

Court: Yarovoye Magistrate's Court, Altai Region

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist pastor – details unknown

Appeal: none

73) 17 September 2019

Part 5

Name: Andrzej Zalewski

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles without deportation

Court: Leningrad District Court, Kaliningrad

Circumstances: Polish citizen and Catholic priest charged for carrying out missionary activity on behalf of Nativity Catholic Church of the Byzantine Rite, which is not a registered religious organisation and has not submitted notification of its existence as a religious group; defendant celebrated the liturgy of St John Chrysostom on premises of Caritas-West charity, with which a lease had been agreed; defendant stated that he had lodged application to register parish as religious organisation three days before alleged

offence (not yet approved, therefore lease invalid); case brought by police after patrol officers noticed loud music and "suspicious citizens" coming from the property.

Appeal: none

74) 19 September 2019

Name: D.D. Sharipov

Punishment: none – case closed for unknown reason

Court: Luga Magistrate's Court No. 81, Leningrad Region

Circumstances: Muslim (same case as Local Religious Organisation of Muslims of Luga and Luga District – see below); details unknown

Appeal: none

75) 19 September 2019

Name: Local Religious Organisation of Muslims of Luga and Luga District

Punishment: none – case closed for unknown reason

Court: Luga Magistrate's Court No. 81, Leningrad Region

Circumstances: same case as Sharipov (above); details unknown

Appeal: none

76) 20 September 2019

Name: Marat Tashenov

Punishment: none – expiry of statute of limitations

Court: Oblivskaya District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Rostov Region

Circumstances: defendant charged for performing unspecified "missionary activity" in an "unregistered Muslim prayer house"

Appeal: none

77) 25 September 2019

Name: D.E. Knyazeva

Punishment: 10,000 Roubles

Court: October District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Novosibirsk

Circumstances: Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged for handing out copies of the book "In search of enlightenment" outside metro station in return for donations; defendant had written authorisation from religious group to carry out missionary activity, the group had notified the Justice Ministry of its existence, and notification of the "public event" (ie. distribution of literature) had been made to the mayor's office – not taken into account by magistrate, but grounds for acquittal on appeal; case brought by police but also involved information from the FSB

Appeal: successful – 18 November 2019, October District Court, Novosibirsk

78) 25 September 2019

Name: Ramazan Khuako

Punishment: 35,000 Roubles

Court: Teuzhesky District Magistrate's Court No. 2, Adygeysk, Adygeya Republic

Circumstances: former imam of Pchegatlukay village mosque charged for continuing to hold services and preach in the mosque after being dismissed in 2015 (and expelled from council of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Adygeya Republic); mosque closed while new imam found, but nobody apparently appointed; available court documents do not specify why defendant was relieved of his positions

Appeal: unsuccessful – 5 December 2019, Teuzhesky District Court; supervisory, unsuccessful – 5 June 2020, 4th Cassational Court, Krasnodar

79) 30 September 2019

Name: I.S. Berezhnov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Chishmy District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Republic of Bashkortostan

Circumstances: leader of Enlightenment Protestant religious group charged for "publicly [disseminating] information about his beliefs among people who are not members of or participants in the religious association" – ie. holding religious services for people with behavioural needs – on residential premises, where, judge notes, missionary activity is prohibited; district prosecutor's office inspection of compliance with Religion Law, based on information from Republic prosecutor's office; local Justice Ministry confirmed that it had received notification of the existence of the religious group

Appeal: none

80) 8 October 2019

Name: Sarsky Khutor Local Muslim Religious Organisation

Punishment: warning

Court: Maysky District Magistrate's Court No. 2, Republic of Kabardino-Balkariya

Circumstances: charged for performing unspecified "missionary activity" in a house of culture, "that is, on premises it had no right to use"; case brought by police on basis of checks made by prosecutor's office, FSB security service, police, and local administration; community had used the building for five years on the basis of an oral agreement with a Maysky local administration staff member; imam pointed out that there were no negative consequences; court agrees and notes that local administration did not claim damages and was not named as a victim by the police

Appeal: case closed as statute of limitations expired – 6 November 2019, Maysky District Court, Republic of Kabardino-Balkariya

81) 10 October 2019

Name: Akhmed Magomedov

Punishment: 6,000 Roubles

Court: Orlovsky District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Rostov Region

Circumstances: Muslim charged for leading prayers on residential premises, "without the creation of a religious group or religious organisation, and also without written notification of the start of a religious group's activities"; case brought by police

Appeal: none

82) 17 October 2019

Name: Saydmakhmad Gayurov

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Leninsk-Kuznetsky Magistrate's Court No. 1, Kemerovo Region

Circumstances: Muslim – details unknown

Appeal: none

83) 25 October 2019

Name: I.R. Azizov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Zimovniki District Magistrate's Court No. 2, Rostov Region

Circumstances: Muslim charged for "conducting collective prayer and preaching, aimed at the dissemination of information about his beliefs (Islam), among people who are not participants in (members of) any Muslim religious organisation or group registered on the territory of Lenin khutor, Zimovniki District, Rostov Region", without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group; defendant is not a member of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Rostov Region and carried out "missionary activity" without written authorisation

Appeal: none

84) 28 October 2019

Name: IC ?çta? ?n?aat - Astaldi Konsorsiyumu ICA

Punishment: 100,000 Roubles

Court: Tosnensky District Magistrate's Court No. 70, Leningrad Region

Circumstances: same case as Bayrak (see below); after police inspection of Turkish construction company's premises "to prevent religious extremism", company charged for allowing a digger driver to act as imam and lead Friday prayers for workers in their camp, without authorising documents from religious organisation, "in the presence of 20 parishioners who are not members of the local religious organisation"; "he discussed and disseminated among them information on his faith, 'Islam'"; multiple witness statements from attendees testifying only to "group prayers"

Appeal: none

85) 29 October 2019

Name: Oleg Kuzin

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: October District Magistrate's Court No. 18, Ryazan

Circumstances: same case as Makarov (see below); pastor of Ryazan Wesleyan Church charged for handing out Gideon New Testaments and Psalters outside Ryazan State Radiotechnical University; defendant taken for questioning by officers of Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism as he handed over a bible; defendant argued that he had not attempted to involve anyone in any religious organisation, and that the New Testament is common to all Christian denominations – two students testified that he asked only if he could give them a bible; defendant had authorisation for missionary activity, but did not present it to police as he did not believe he was carrying out missionary activity

Appeal: successful – 15 January 2020, October District Court, Ryazan

86) 30 October 2019

Name: Local Religious Organisation of Muslims of Yegoryevsk District

Punishment: 100,000 Roubles

Court: Yegoryevsk District Magistrate's Court No. 46, Moscow Region

Circumstances: as result of inspection by prosecutor's office, FSB security service, police, fire service, and consumer rights and

human welfare inspectorate, Muslim organisation charged for carrying out missionary activity without notifying the authorities of a change in the location of its activities (ie. it holds services at a different address from the one in its tax records); accused of "disseminating information about their doctrine of 'Islam', including during the implementation of religious events in the prayer house, with the involvement of a significant number of citizens of various nationalities who are not members of the [religious organisation], which leads (can lead) to a change in citizens' religion and their adoption of the corresponding religion"

Appeal: unsuccessful – 25 March 2020, Yegoryevsk City Court, Moscow Region

87) 31 October 2019

Name: Aleksandr Solovyov

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Shadrinsk District Magistrate's Court No. 26, Kurgan Region

Circumstances: after prosecutor's office inspection (based on information from FSB security service), Baptist Union pastor (Ark Church, Shadrinsk) and director of rehabilitation centre charged for conducting "rites and services, the study of religion, and religious education" without having submitted notification of the existence of a religious group; FSB noted that the centre was used "to disseminate Protestant religious teachings of an extremist orientation"; according to prosecutors, during the service, defendant "reads a Biblical text, explains it, and comments on it, ie. carries out missionary activity"; centre volunteer and patients testify that Bible study is a part of daily activities, but defendant is rarely present at the centre and has not attempted to involve them in any religious group; judge notes that prosecutor's office inspection was conducted in violation of the law, as the wrong person (ie. not defendant) was informed that it would take place and witnesses were not warned of their rights and responsibilities under the law, and therefore all evidence obtained is inadmissible

Appeal: by prosecutor, unsuccessful – 12 December 2019, Shadrinsk District Court, Kurgan Region

88) 6 November 2019

Name: Yuliya Arkharova

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Moscow District Magistrate's Court No. 10, Ryazan

Circumstances: same case as Gruzdev (below); Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged for posting Hare Krishna videos on the Gaurang Club's openly accessible VKontakte social network page, alongside photos of the club's yoga classes; expert witness testified that the videos/photos show "a religious action to which everyone is invited, which indicates that these events are consistent with the definition of missionary activity, aimed at attracting new participants, as well as introducing everyone who wishes to the teaching of Krishnaism. The information on the creed of Krishnaism distributed by [Arkharova] is not aimed at the neutral informing of others about the religious association and its activities"; no Hare Krishna religious organisation registered in Ryazan and no notification sent to Justice Ministry of the creation of a religious group; verdict refers to "defining feature of missionary activity" though does not cite Constitutional Court

Appeal: successful – 10 December 2019, Moscow District Court, Ryazan

89) 6 November 2019

Name: Vladislav Gruzdev

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Moscow District Magistrate's Court No. 10, Ryazan

Circumstances: same case as Arkharova (above); Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged for posting Hare Krishna videos linked to the Gaurang Club, and other Hare Krishna themed video material, on his own VKontakte social network page.

Appeal: successful – 10 December 2019, Moscow District Court, Ryazan

90) 14 November 2019

Name: Tyurkan Bayrak

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Tosnensky District Magistrate's Court No. 70, Leningrad Region

Circumstances: same case as Turkish construction company (above); digger driver charged for leading Friday prayers for construction workers in their camp, without authorising documents from religious organisation, "in the presence of 20 parishioners who are not members of the local religious organisation"; "he discussed and disseminated among them information on his faith, 'Islam'; multiple witness statements from attendees testifying only to "group prayers"

Appeal: none

91) 26 November 2019

Part 5

Name: Sun Sig Un

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Prikubansky District Court, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: South Korean – details unknown

Appeal: none

92) 27 November 2019

Name: Sergey Bachkala

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Apsheronk District Magistrate's Court No. 252, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: after police inspection, Council of Churches Baptist pastor charged for holding services in his house without authorisation for missionary activity from a religious group or organisation, and without submitting notification to the Justice Ministry of the existence of a religious group; "On the facade of [the house] are banners with religious content. Thus, in violation of the [Religion Law], Bachkala publicly displays materials providing information about the belief system of the religious group Evangelical Christians-Baptists, which has not passed state registration .. in the opinion of the court, [the banners] are aimed at arousing the desire of citizens to study this belief system, as well as in order to involve individuals as followers of the belief system"; mentions "defining feature of missionary activity"; "Almost all the information posted at map.drevolife.ru is devoted to the activities of the Protestant churches of the Russian Federation, which, in the opinion of the court, cannot be regarded as neutral information, but testifies to Bachkala's conscious missionary activity on the Internet, aimed at spreading the beliefs of the religious group of Evangelical Christians-Baptists".

Appeal: unsuccessful – 16 January 2020, Apsheronk District Court, Krasnodar Region

93) 10 December 2019

Name: Artur Utyamishev

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Nevsky District Magistrate's No. 130, St Petersburg

Circumstances: building site director charged for allowing a Muslim prayer room in his workers' accommodation; defence argued that defendant did not conduct missionary activity, as not a member of any religious association; also pointed out that no mosque is nearby; judge notes "defining feature" of missionary activity

Appeal: none

94) 12 December 2019

Name: Fyodor Makarov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: October District Magistrate's Court No. 18, Ryazan

Circumstances: same case as Kuzin (above); member of Ryazan Wesleyan Church charged for handing out Gideon New Testaments and Psalters outside Ryazan State Radiotechnical University; defendant did have authorisation for missionary activity – ignored by police but grounds for acquittal on appeal.

Appeal: successful – 12 February 2020, October District Court, Ryazan

95) 13 December 2019

Name: Sergey Parakhin

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Lenin District Magistrate's Court No. 4, Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk Region

Circumstances: after inspection by Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism, Seventh-day Adventist pastor charged for conducting weekly services in church, while not having power of attorney for the religious organisation; appeal judge notes that building belongs to church, defendant was officially appointed as clergy, and the holding of services by clergyman on church's own premises does not constitute missionary activity under the Constitutional Court's March 2018 definition

Appeal: successful – 30 January 2020, Lenin District Court, Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk Region

96) 19 December 2019

Name: Khater (Memory) Local Religious Organisation of Muslims

Punishment: 50,000 Roubles

Court: Ordzhonikidze District Magistrate's Court No. 5, Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk Region

Circumstances: after inspection by Centre for Countering Extremism "aimed at verifying the existence of extremist activities", Muslim community charged for holding services; according to prosecutors "any citizen had access" and "at the entrance of the religious organisation was a sign with its name and an indication of [its] religion; this information can encourage any citizen to get acquainted with the religion, this activity pertains to missionary activity since it is aimed at disseminating information on its doctrine among non-participants"; premises sub-let from driving school (agreement since terminated by Muslims) – prosecutors argued that prayers violated terms of lease, which stated that premises could only be used for educational activities; representatives argued that the organisation did not conduct missionary activity, but only held Friday prayers, followed by a sermon, which were only attended by Muslims, and "everyone who comes is accepted"; counter-extremism officer confirmed in court that no evidence of extremist activity had been found; "taking into account the fact that Khater does not limit attendance at religious events [and] there was no register of followers .. the activity of Khater may be qualified as 'missionary'; purpose of services is "to convey to other people the meaning of the Muslim religion, [and] the righteousness of the life of the Prophet clarifies its meaning. At the same time, as a result of this clarification, the meeting participants learn about the creed and its tenets. The magistrate considers that there is also a second sign of missionary activity - a focus on the dissemination of information about one's beliefs among persons who are not participants (members, followers) of a given religious association, in order to involve them in the activities of a religious association. Also, the presence of the third sign of missionary activity is confirmed, namely, its implementation in public, since these activities were carried out in a public place with the participation of more than 20 people, with free access, as shown, in particular, by police attending the meeting during the inspection"

Appeal: unsuccessful – 27 February 2020, Ordzhonikidze District Court, Magnitogorsk; supervisory appeal lodged 10 April 2020, 7th Cassational Court, Chelyabinsk – outcome unknown

97) 23 December 2019

Part 5

Name: Hamza Çal?skan

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles plus deportation (monitored independent departure)

Court: Soviet District Court, Astrakhan

Circumstances: Islamic teacher and Turkish citizen charged for giving sermons "aimed at revealing the essence of the religion of Islam of the Hanafi persuasion", as established by inspections of the City of Astrakhan Medrese religious group by regional prosecutor's office and Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism; defendant did not have authorisation to carry out missionary activity on behalf of the religious group, and religious group had not submitted notification of its existence to the Justice Ministry

Appeal: none

98) 24 December 2019

Part 5

Name: Galym Amirov

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles plus deportation (monitored independent departure)

Court: Soviet District Court, Astrakhan

Circumstances: Islamic teacher and Kazakh citizen charged for giving sermons "aimed at revealing the essence of the religion of Islam of the Hanafi persuasion", as established by inspections of the City of Astrakhan Medrese religious group by regional prosecutor's office and Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism; defendant did not have authorisation to carry out missionary activity on behalf of the religious group, and religious group had not submitted notification of its existence to the Justice Ministry

Appeal: none

99) 25 December 2019

Name: Akhl al-Beyt (Family of the Prophet) Local Religious Organisation of Muslims

Punishment: 100,000 Roubles

Court: Ordzhonikidze District Magistrate's Court No. 8, Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk Region

Circumstances: Muslim community charged for holding twice-weekly services accessible to all in rented premises without the agreement of both owners (contract only signed by one); inspection carried out by Centre for Countering Extremism; witness states that his acquaintance, the head of the community, invited him to the premises for supper and to discuss religious topics

Appeal: unsuccessful – 12 February 2020, Ordzhonikidze District Court, Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk Region

100) 25 December 2019

Name: Rimm Urazayev

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Agapovka District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Chelyabinsk Region

Circumstances: as result of prosecutor's office inspection, Muslim charged for holding Friday prayers in a residential property (which has a minaret and a sign indicating that it is a mosque) and without submitting notification of the existence of a religious group

Appeal: unsuccessful – 6 May 2020, Agapovka District Court, Chelyabinsk Region

(END)

Full reports on freedom of thought, conscience and belief in Russia
(<http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?query=&religion=all&country=10>)

For more background see Forum 18's survey of the general state of freedom of religion and belief in Russia

(http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2246), as well as Forum 18's survey of the dramatic decline in this freedom related to Russia's Extremism Law (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 (http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1468)

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

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f18news @ editor.forum18.org

Forum 18
Postboks 6603
Rodeløkka
N-0502 Oslo
NORWAY