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RUSSIA: 71 known "missionary activity" prosecutions in 2021 – list

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

Forum 18 found 71 prosecutions in 2021 (4 of organisations and 67 of individuals) for violating Russia's July 2016 Administrative Code Article 5.26, Parts 4 and 5, which punish "illegal missionary activity". 44 of the prosecutions resulted in initial convictions, all being punished with fines (though 7 were overturned on appeal). In 2021 there was a conviction rate of 85 per cent. Of the 15 foreigners prosecuted, 4 were fined, of whom 3 were also ordered deported.

In the calendar year 2021, there were at least 71 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.

The 71 prosecutions represent a decrease on recent years. Forum 18 found 100 cases in 2019 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2594) and 79 cases in 2020 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2731). Lawyers and human rights defenders have noted a number of possible reasons for this, including the coronavirus pandemic and the "increased legal literacy" of religious communities.

The shift towards more prosecutions for Muslim religious activities, first observed by Forum 18 in 2019 and the first half of 2020, has continued (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2731).

(For a full analysis of such prosecutions between July 2020 and December 2021, see here (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2731).)

(See here for a full list of the 37 known cases in the second half of 2020 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2732).)

Of the 71 cases known to have reached court in 2021, four involved legal entities and 67 individuals.

Forty-four resulted in conviction and eight in acquittal, while judges sent back 16 cases to police or prosecutors (two more cases were closed because the statute of limitations had expired and one was closed for unknown reasons). The calendar year 2021 therefore saw a conviction rate (for those cases which reached a verdict) of 84.62 per cent. All those convicted received fines, though seven of these were later overturned on appeal.

Of the 15 foreigners charged under Article 5.26, Part 5 ("Foreigners conducting missionary activity"), three were ordered deported (none was detained before departure).

Russia has also imposed its "anti-missionary" legislation in the Ukrainian territory of Crimea, which it illegally occupied in 2014. At least 23 prosecutions under Article 5.26, Part 4 are known to have been launched in 2021, all of which led to convictions and fines (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2720).

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 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2246).

Religious organisations also continue to face prosecution under Administrative Code Article 5.26, Part 3 (https://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").

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List of known prosecutions in 2021

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 2021 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 represented nearly four weeks' average wages in 2021 for those in work or nearly 13 weeks' average state retirement pension.

1) 1 January 2021

Part 5

Name: D.R. Makhmudzhonov

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Butyrsky District Court, Moscow

Circumstances: same case as Mukhammadzhonov, Nasirzhan, Mamasharifov, and Tursunov (below) – after Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre and FSB inspection of compliance with anti-terrorism and migration law, Muslim (citizenship unknown) charged for "participation on a regular basis in Muslim religious worship (collective prayer, namaz), as well as the reading of sermons with other citizens", in their accommodation; judge notes lack of evidence of "defining feature" of missionary activity

Appeal: none

2) 1 January 2021

Part 5

Name: Kh.Kh. Mukhammadzhonov

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Butyrsky District Court, Moscow

Circumstances: same case as Makhmudzhonov (above) and Nasirzhan, Mamasharifov, and Tursunov (below) – after Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre and FSB inspection of compliance with anti-terrorism and migration law, Muslim (citizenship unknown) charged for "participation on a regular basis in Muslim religious worship (collective prayer, namaz), as well as the reading of sermons with other citizens", in their accommodation; judge notes lack of evidence of "defining feature" of missionary activity

Appeal: none

3) 1 January 2021

Part 5

Name: U.B. Nasirzhan

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Butyrsky District Court, Moscow

Circumstances: same case as Makhmudzhonov and Mukhammadzhonov (above) and Mamasharifov and Tursunov (below) – after Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre and FSB inspection of compliance with anti-terrorism and migration law, Muslim (citizenship unknown) charged for "participation on a regular basis in Muslim religious worship (collective prayer, namaz), as well as the reading of sermons with other citizens", in their accommodation; judge notes lack of evidence of "defining feature" of missionary activity

Appeal: none

4) 1 January 2021

Part 5

Name: A.M. Mamasharifov

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Butyrsky District Court, Moscow

Circumstances: same case as Makhmudzhonov, Mukhammadzhonov, and Nasirzhan (above) and Tursunov (below) – after Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre and FSB inspection of compliance with anti-terrorism and migration law, Muslim (citizenship unknown) charged for "participation on a regular basis in Muslim religious worship (collective prayer, namaz), as well as the reading of sermons with other citizens", in their accommodation; judge notes lack of evidence of "defining feature" of missionary activity

Appeal: none

5) 1 January 2021

Part 5

Name: N.R. Tursunov

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Butyrsky District Court, Moscow

Circumstances: same case as Makhmudzhonov, Mukhammadzhonov, Nasirzhan, and Mamasharifov (above) – after Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre and FSB inspection of compliance with anti-terrorism and migration law, Muslim (citizenship unknown) charged for "participation on a regular basis in Muslim religious worship (collective prayer, namaz), as well as the reading of sermons with other citizens", in their accommodation; judge notes lack of evidence of "defining feature" of missionary activity

Appeal: none

6) 20 January 2021

Name: Zhanna Albertovna Kuzina

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Uzlovaya District Magistrate's Court No. 43, Tula Region

Circumstances: same case as Rudnev (below) – after inspection by Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre officers, Seventh-day Adventist charged for running Saturday school, involving prayer and Bible study, in house belonging to church, "without documents confirming the right to hold this religious event"; defence stated that only church members were present – judge concludes that no evidence of their membership presented in case file (based on church's statutory requirement for personal application for membership)

Appeal: successful (no offence committed – 2018 Constitutional Court definition of "missionary activity" (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377) cited) – 1 April 2021, Uzlovaya City Court, Tula Region

7) 20 January 2021

Name: Sergey Vladimirovich Rudnev

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Uzlovaya District Magistrate's Court No. 43, Tula Region

Circumstances: same case as Kuzina (above) – after inspection by Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre officers, Seventh-day Adventist charged for leading religious worship in house belonging to church, "without documents confirming the right to hold this religious event"; defence stated that only church members were present – judge concludes that no evidence of their membership presented in case file (based on church's statutory requirement for personal application for membership)

Appeal: successful (no offence committed – 2018 Constitutional Court definition (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377) cited) – 1 April 2021, Uzlovaya City Court, Tula Region

8) 22 January 2021

Name: Alo Ibrokhimovich Bobomurodov

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Zavolzhsky District Magistrate's Court No. 5, Tver

Circumstances: Muslim charged (by prosecutor, after FSB inspection) for reading Friday prayers for fellow workers in a prayer room provided by their employer; defendant argued that "The prayer service was attended only by Muslims who had expressed a wish to be there"; citing the Constitutional Court's 2018 clarification (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377) of missionary activity, judge noted that witnesses stated that only Muslims attended the prayers and there was no evidence that any non-Muslims were present, and concluded that "conducting the Muslim religious rite 'namaz' (prayer) among Muslims who profess Islam cannot be qualified as missionary in the sense of the [Religion Law], and therefore does not constitute an offence"; same case as Shrinov (below)

Appeal: by prosecution, unsuccessful – 10 March 2021, Zavolzhsky District Court, Tver

9) 25 January 2021

Name: Gafor Khomorovich Shirinov

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Zavolzhsky District Magistrate's Court No. 5, Tver

Circumstances: Muslim charged (by prosecutor, after FSB inspection) for reading Friday prayers for fellow workers in a prayer room provided by their employer – same case as Bobomurodov (above)

Appeal: by prosecution, unsuccessful – 15 March 2021, Zavolzhsky District Court, Tver

10) 4 February 2021

Name: Maksim Andreyevich Lopatka

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Soviet District Magistrate's Court No. 4, Voronezh

Circumstances: Christian (unknown denomination) apparently charged for distributing religious literature while handing out hot meals.

Appeal: none

11) 14 February 2021

Name: unknown

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Tabasaransky District Magistrate's Court No. 80, Republic of Dagestan

Circumstances: same case as below – Muslim charged for carrying out unknown missionary activity at a madrassah

Appeal: none

12) 14 February 2021

Name: unknown

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Tabasaransky District Magistrate's Court No. 80, Republic of Dagestan

Circumstances: same case as a above – Muslim charged for carrying out unknown missionary activity at a madrassah

Appeal: none

13) 18 February 2021

Part 5

Name: Dzheykhun Elkhon ogly Musayev

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles without deportation

Court: Myski City Court, Kemerovo Region

Circumstances: Azerbaijani citizen charged for carrying out unspecified missionary activity in unregistered and unfinished mosque belonging to the 'Commonwealth' Azerbaijani Community (a public organisation), without authorisation from religious group to carry out missionary activity; land plot designated for individual housing construction and no notification of existence of religious group submitted

Appeal: none

14) Unknown date, March 2021

Name: unknown

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Novosergiyevka District Magistrate's Court No. 2, Orenburg Region

Circumstances: leader of Baptist Union religious group charged after prosecutor's office inspection for holding services "to which any person could come", according to district court press statement, and maintaining a library "in which anyone who wished could borrow a book" – without having submitted notification of existence of religious group

Appeal: none

15) 2 March 2021

Name: Abdulo Sirozhov

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Borovsky District Magistrate's Court No. 20, Kaluga Region

Circumstances: Muslim, same case as Akplast (below); judge cites 2018 Constitutional Court clarification (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377) of missionary activity and concludes that case materials contain no evidence that defendant carried out missionary activity; "In itself, the collective reading of books on religious subjects without the presence of the defining feature of missionary activity does not constitute an offence under Part 4"

Appeal: none

16) 2 March 2021

Name: Akplast (building materials manufacturing company)

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Borovsky District Magistrate's Court No. 20, Kaluga Region

Circumstances: same case as Sirozhov (above); judge cites 2018 Constitutional Court clarification (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377) of missionary activity and concludes that case materials contain no evidence that company (which provided a Muslim prayer room for employees) carried out missionary activity; "In itself, the

collective reading of books on religious subjects without the presence of the defining feature of missionary activity does not constitute an offence under Part 4"

Appeal: none

17) 11 March 2021

Part 5

Name: Shakhmar Gazarkhan ogly Safarov

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles without deportation

Court: October District Court, Saratov

Circumstances: Azerbaijani citizen (religious affiliation unknown) charged for carrying out unspecified missionary activity without having submitted notification of the existence of a religious group

Appeal: none

18) 16 March 2021

Name: Mikhail Aleksandrovich Frolov

Punishment: none – statute of limitations

Court: Solnechegorsk Magistrate's Court No. 329, Moscow Region

Circumstances: Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged by police for carrying out unspecified "missionary activity" without authorisation from religious group; case initially sent back for technical insufficiencies on 4 February 2021

Appeal: none

19) 26 March 2021

Name: Anvar Zarifovich Saleyev

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Ostankino District Magistrate's Court No. 98, Moscow

Circumstances: Muslim (same case as Risalyat community below) – details unknown

Appeal: none

20) 26 March 2021

Name: Risalyat Muslim Community Local Religious Organisation

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Ostankino District Magistrate's Court No. 98, Moscow

Circumstances: same case as Saleyev (above) – details unknown

Appeal: none

21) 31 March 2021

Part 5

Name: Toshpulat Ikramovich Melikov

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Pushkin District Court, St Petersburg

Circumstances: Uzbek citizen charged for "missionary activity in violation of the requirements of the law"; defendant stated he had only set up a prayer room for fellow Muslim employees at his workplace, and no other people had been invited or had attended; judge notes that case materials contained no information on what religious association defendant allegedly represented, or what beliefs he allegedly disseminated or how this was done

Appeal: none

22) 1 April 2021

Name: Kasim Magomedapandiyevich Dzhanemirov

Punishment: 7,000 Roubles

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

Circumstances: after prosecutor's office and FSB inspection of compliance with Extremism Law, leader of Muslim religious group "Khidayat" charged for "conducting prayers and performing religious rites for the purpose of collectively practicing Islam and disseminating the faith – that is, carrying out missionary activities, in the absence of documents confirming the authority to carry out missionary activities", in the group's prayer house

Appeal: unsuccessful – 17 May 2021, Martynovsky District Court, Rostov Region

23) 7 April 2021

Name: Gennady Mikhailovich Tutarinov

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Mikhailovsky District Magistrate's Court, Amur Region

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist charged for handing out religious literature in the street and talking to people about faith in Jesus – confronted by two plain-clothes FSB officers

Appeal: successful (no offence committed) – 2 August 2021, Mikhailovsky District Court, Amur Region

24) 8 April 2021

Name: Vitaly Valentinovich Glebov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Obninsk District Magistrate's Court No. 15, Kaluga Region

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist charged for holding Bible study in private house attended by several unknown people – FSB officers arrived shortly after they left

Appeal: unsuccessful – 22 June 2021, Obninsk City Court, Kaluga Region

25) 8 April 2021

Name: Andrey Aleksandrovich Sheremetov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Belgorod District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Belgorod Region

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist charged by police after report from member of the public about people distributing Bibles inside a shopping centre; witness testified that he had been given a Bible and instructions on "how to read it correctly", and told that details of services could be found online

Appeal: none

26) 9 April 2021

Name: Ilya Aleksandrovich Naumenko

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Shebekino and Shebekino District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Belgorod Region

Circumstances: Baptist charged for display of religious literature in cafe; in light of 2018 Constitutional Court clarification (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377), judge concludes that no evidence presented that defendant carried out missionary activity, or of how this was done.

Appeal: none

27) 12 April 2021

Name: D.M. Shiryayev

Punishment: 6000 Roubles

Court: Ust-Koksa District Magistrate's Court, Altay Republic

Circumstances: Seventh-day Adventist charged for distributing religious literature at airport (handing over one copy and laying out others in airport lounge "for public viewing") without authorisation from religious organisation; defendant claimed that he was acting on his own behalf, not religious organisation's, and was unaware of legal requirements on missionary activity; defendant was carrying documentation from publisher authorising him to "conduct surveys of public opinion, distribute the publisher's products, and conduct promotions" – judge concluded this did not grant right to perform missionary activity.

Appeal: none

28) 15 April 2021

Name: Magomed Arslanbekovich Asuyev

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Prikubansky Inner-City District Magistrate's Court No. 240, Krasnodar

Circumstances: imam charged for leading weekly Friday prayers at Muslim prayer house for 100-200 people, without authorisation from a religious organisation

Appeal: none

29) 20 April 2021

Name: F.M Nurislamov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Kushnarenkovo District Magistrate's Court, Republic of Bashkortostan

Circumstances: Christian of unknown affiliation charged for distributing New Testament in the street – police appear to have been informed by member of the public; defendant claimed he was acting on his own behalf; same case as Kholbayev (see below).

Appeal: none

30) 20 April 2021

Name: R.Yu. Kholbayev

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Kushnarenkovo District Magistrate's Court, Republic of Bashkortostan

Circumstances: Christian of unknown affiliation charged for distributing New Testament in the street – same case as Nurislamov (see above)

Appeal: none

31) 27 April 2021

Name: Konstantin Pavlovich Sklyarov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Central District Magistrate's Court No. 106, Sochi, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: Hindu (follower of Vaishnavism) charged because he "led a religious event" at a cultural centre without authorisation from a religious organisation

Appeal: none

32) 14 May 2021

Name: Andrey Aleksandrovich Sheremetov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Western District Magistrate's Court No. 10, Belgorod

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist charged by police for organising two-day exhibition of Bible history in rented premises inside shopping centre (including display of Bibles and other literature, tours, and literature to take away) without authorisation from a religious organisation to carry out missionary activity; on basis of witness statements, judge concluded that defendant "told citizens about the Bible and suggested that they attend a [worship] meeting, which indicates that [his] activity .. had all the hallmarks of missionary activity, and was not a simple gift of printed materials and telling passers-by about his personal religious beliefs".

Appeal: unsuccessful – 21 July 2021, October District Court, Belgorod; cassational, unsuccessful (rejected without consideration) – 8 September 2021, 1st Cassational Court, Saratov

33) 20 May 2021

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

Punishment: 50,000 Roubles

Court: Uglich District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Yaroslavl Region

Circumstances: after prosecutor's office inspection, Muslim community charged for carrying out "religious activity" on residential premises; community chairman argued that this was a service of Friday prayers, attended only by Muslims, conducted at his home because there was no space for Islamic worship elsewhere in the town; judge concludes that services constitute missionary activity because people other than the founder members of the religious organisation were present

Appeal: none

34) 24 May 2021

Name: Zakhid Saidrakhimov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Gubakha District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Perm Region

Circumstances: same case as Safarov (below); Muslim charged for reading prayers among fellow workers in Stellar Construction

Company hostel "without a document issued by the governing body of a religious organisation and confirming the authority to carry out missionary activities on behalf of this religious organisation"

Appeal: none

35) 24 May 2021

Name: Kh. Sh. Safarov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Gubakha District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Perm Region

Circumstances: same case as Saidrakhimov (above); Muslim charged for reading prayers among fellow workers in Stellar Construction Company hostel "without a document issued by the governing body of a religious organisation and confirming the authority to carry out missionary activities on behalf of this religious organisation"

Appeal: none

36) 25 May 2021

Name: M.G. Aselderov

Punishment: 10,000 Roubles

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

Circumstances: Muslim charged by police for leading collective prayers and preaching in residential premises without being a member of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Rostov Region and without authorisation from any religious organisation

Appeal: none

37) 27 May 2021

Name: Isa Baumatgireyevich Khamkhoyev

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Sunzha District Court, Republic of Ingushetiya

Circumstances: imam and former head of the Spiritual Centre of Muslims of the Republic of Ingushetiya charged for giving sermon in mosque and uploading video of it to Instagram, where it got 4000 views (found during prosecutor's office monitoring of the internet); religious organisation liquidated by Supreme Court of Republic of Ingushetiya in September 2019 – imam therefore deemed to be "continuing the activities" of a liquidated organisation, prohibited under anti-missionary amendment; no notification submitted of the creation of a religious group.

Appeal: successful (statute of limitations) – 14 July 2021, Supreme Court of Republic of Ingushetiya; cassational appeal lodged apparently by prosecution on 15 November 2021, 5th Cassational Court, Pyatigorsk

38) 28 May 2021

Name: Matvey Viktorovich Zagvozdkin

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Zavolzhsky District Magistrate's Court No. 5, Ulyanovsk

Circumstances: member of Protestant church charged by Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre officials for uploading audio recordings of lectures, sermons, and services to church VKontakte group of which he is administrator, without labelling them with the religious organisation's official full name; defendant argued that he did not upload the files, which had already been uploaded when he joined the group; lawyer Vladimir Ozolin pointed out that defendant had authorisation to carry out missionary activity and that alleged offence should in any case be prosecuted under Part 3 (under which individuals cannot be liable), not Part 4; prosecution witness testified that he had listened to the recordings, become interested in the church, and attended a service; defence witnesses

testified that recordings could have been uploaded by any member of the group over period of 15 years; judge cites Constitutional Court's 2018 clarification (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377) of missionary activity and notes that, under the circumstances, defendant could only be found guilty if lacking written authorisation to carry out missionary activity, the Part 4 charge was "unwarranted", and defendant could not be liable under Part 3 – also noted no evidence that defendant had uploaded the recordings, and various technical deficiencies in the indictment.

Appeal: none

39) 3 June 2021

Part 5

Name: Corey Daniel Shepherd

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

Court: Soviet District Court, Astrakhan

Circumstances: US citizen and Baptist (in Russia as English teacher) charged by prosecutor on basis of information from Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre, for being "initiator of religious activities aimed at revealing the essence of [his] beliefs among members of the religious group of Protestant-Baptists, the 'Southern Association of Baptists' and other persons present, on behalf of the specified religious association, telling those present about God, comparing different religions, [and] showing videos of religious preachers, in which the [Baptist faith] is described and praised" – specifically, for leading two multi-day events at a leisure centre, including prayers, without written authorisation from religious group; defendant also accused of running website and Instagram account "in order to spread the religious teachings of Protestant-Baptists"

Appeal: none

40) 4 June 2021

Name: Dmitry Aleksandrovich Armyaninov

Punishment: 7,000 Roubles

Court: Takhtamukhay District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Republic of Adygeya

Circumstances: same case as Tereshchenko (below) – on basis of inspection by FSB, Pentecostal charged for carrying out missionary activities at drug and alcohol rehab centre on behalf of Ark of Revelation church, without authorisation and without notification to Justice Ministry of group's existence; two residents testify that they and others took part in worship services and Bible study organised by defendant, and that they converted to the Protestant faith

Appeal: unsuccessful – 17 August 2021, Takhtamukhay District Court, Republic of Adygeya

41) 4 June 2021

Name: Sergey Nikolayevich Tereshchenko

Punishment: 7,000 Roubles

Court: Takhtamukhay District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Republic of Adygeya

Circumstances: same case as Armyaninov (above) – on basis of inspection by FSB, Pentecostal charged for carrying out missionary activities at drug and alcohol rehab centre on behalf of Ark of Revelation church, without authorisation and without notification to Justice Ministry of group's existence; two residents testify that they and others took part in worship services and Bible study organised by defendant, and that they converted to the Protestant faith

Appeal: successful (statute of limitations) – 23 July 2021, Takhtamukhay District Court, Republic of Adygeya

42) 7 June 2021

Name: Aleksey Borisovich Stepanov

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Nevsky District Magistrate's Court No. 134, St Petersburg

Circumstances: unknown

Appeal: none

43) 10 June 2021

Name: Yekaterina Anatolyevna Kalinkina

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: October District Magistrate's Court No. 5, Izhevsk, Udmurt Republic

Circumstances: Hindu (adherent of Shivaism) charged by prosecutor's office (after monitoring by Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre) for posting information about festival in honour of Hindu god Shiva (time, date, contact details) on community page and own profile page on VKontakte, both fully accessible; defence argued that defendant "did not disseminate information about her beliefs, did not act in the interests of any association, her activities were not aimed at involving people in the membership of a religious association. Public dissemination of information about a specific religious doctrine, aimed at neutrally informing others about a religious association [and] its activities, cannot be regarded as missionary activity"; judge notes that no notification of creation of religious group sent to Justice Ministry, and thus invitations were an offence.

Appeal: unsuccessful – 23 August 2021, October District Court, Izhevsk, Udmurt Republic

44) 15 June 2021

Name: Regional Cultural-Educational Public Organisation "Ezrat-Akhim Sankt-Peterburg"

Punishment: none – sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Moscow District Magistrate's Court No. 118, St. Petersburg

Circumstances: Jewish cultural organisation – details unknown

Appeal: none

45) 22 June 2021

Part 5

Name: Pavel Vasilyevich Gerashchenko

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles without deportation

Court: Maysky District Court, Republic of Kabardino-Balkariya

Circumstances: Ukrainian citizen and Baptist pastor charged by police for disseminating information about his beliefs to four people – in person, online, and by giving them books – knowing that they were Muslims, without written authorisation from any Baptist organisation or group registered in the Republic

Appeal: none

46) 26 June 2021

Part 5

Name: Dmitry Sergeyevich Okovityy

Punishment: 30,000 Roubles without deportation

Court: Bezhitsky District Court, Bryansk

Circumstances: Belarusian citizen charged for carrying out missionary activity on behalf of Church of Evangelical Christians of Minsk, without authorisation from religious organisation, by speaking at seminar run by Power of the Resurrection Church (Protestant religious group) in Bryansk; witness (not member of the church) testified that defendant called on attendees to carry out missionary activity in the region, and "disseminated information about his beliefs in order to involve [them] in the activities of Protestant religious structures"; defendant stated he had been invited by friend who leads religious group, in order to share his experiences of missionary work.

Appeal: unsuccessful – 9 September 2021, Bryansk Regional Court

47) 2 July 2021

Name: Vladimir Kharitonovich Popov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Armavir Magistrate's Court No. 8, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: Council of Churches Baptist presbyter charged after prosecutor's office inspection of prayer house for holding services without authorisation from a religious organisation or group to carry out missionary activity; witness testified that he had attended services while not a member of the religious group and that access to the prayer house was not limited in any way

Appeal: none

48) 5 July 2021

Name: Yevgeny Markovich Tolochinsky

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Vasileostrovsky District Magistrate's Court No. 11, St Petersburg

Circumstances: Jewish yeshiva director – details unknown

Appeal: none

49) 8 July 2021

Name: Gamzat Zurkanoyevich Magomedov

Punishment: 20,000 Roubles

Court: Maykop Magistrate's Court No. 3, Republic of Adygeya

Circumstances: Muslim charged by police for distributing As-salam Islamic newspaper as volunteer for charitable organisation "Way" ["Put"] at Maykop Central Market, "while not being a member of any religious organisation"; defendant argued that "distribution of this newspaper is his personal desire, in order to educate the population of Russia"

Appeal: unsuccessful – 2 September 2021, Maykop City Court, Republic of Adygeya

50) 12 July 2021

Part 5

Name: Zhamolidin Sotivoldyyevich Yakubov

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Livny District Court, Oryol Region

Circumstances: Muslim charged by police for leading worship in an "unregistered Muslim prayer house", without authorisation from a religious group; defendant stated that he was not a leader or member of any religious group or organisation, that the prayers had been in honour of a holiday, and that only Muslims had attended; judge does not directly cite 2018 Constitutional Court definition (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377), but refers to "defining feature" [sistemobrazuyushchy признак] of

missionary activity and concludes that defendant "conducted a Muslim religious ceremony among followers of this religion, which cannot be regarded as missionary activity"

Appeal: none

51) 15 July 2021

Name: Sh. M. Magomedov

Punishment: unknown fine

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

Circumstances: unknown

Appeal: none

52) 16 July 2021

Name: Konstantin Lvovich Loskutov

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Maykop Magistrate's Court No. 3, Republic of Adygeya

Circumstances: pastor of Protestant "Christian Business Fellowship"- details unknown

Appeal: none

53) 19 July 2021

Name: Aleksey Vladimirovich Denisov

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Novorossiysk Magistrate's Court No. 81, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged by police for handing out books in the street, despite having written authorisation to carry out missionary activity; police did not indicate nature of violation in case materials

Appeal: none

54) 5 August 2021

Name: Vener Bulatovich Kutlumbetov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles, plus destruction of religious literature

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

Circumstances: charged for attempting to hand out religious literature, including 34 copies of Christian newspaper "Do you believe?", at public transport stop, without authorisation from religious organisation or group; judge refers to Supreme Court's review of judicial practice re. missionary activity, but concludes that literature could not be described as "neutrally informing others about the religious association"; judge cites 2018 Constitutional Court clarification (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377)

Appeal: none

55) 18 August 2021

Part 5

Name: Makhmadvali Vokhidovich Tabarov

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Yakutsk City Court, Republic of Sakha (Yakutiya)

Circumstances: Muslim charged by police for praying with others on residential premises, without authorisation to perform missionary activity; defence argued that this was merely the five prayers a day required in Islam, carried out in the room in which they slept, "which is not in violation of the law"; judge cites 2018 Constitutional Court definition (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377) in concluding that defendant did not carry out missionary activity "among persons who are not members of a religious association"

Appeal: none

56) 1 September 2021

Name: Vera Vasilyevna Lyalkina

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Irkutsk District Magistrate's Court No. 64, Irkutsk

Circumstances: Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged for giving book to another person inside a temple, without authorisation to carry out missionary activity

Appeal: none

57) 22 September 2021

Name: Inna Aleksandrovna Grabovetskaya

Punishment: none – acquitted

Court: Central District Magistrate's Court No. 4, Kemerovo

Circumstances: Hare Krishna adherent charged for distributing literature "related to the local religious organisation, the Kemerovo Society for Krishna Consciousness" in the street, while not being a member of the organisation and not having written authorisation to carry out missionary activity on its behalf;

Appeal: by police, unsuccessful – 30 November 2021, Central District Court, Kemerovo

58) 23 September 2021

Name: Nail Amirovich Gubaydullin

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Naberezhnyye Chelny Magistrate's Court No. 8, Tatarstan Republic

Circumstances: unknown

Appeal: none

59) 28 September 2021

Name: Daniyar Nabiyevich Imashev

Punishment: 15,000 Roubles

Court: Trusovsky District Magistrate's Court No. 5, Astrakhan

Circumstances: Muslim imam – details unknown

Appeal: successful (statute of limitations) – 1 December 2021, Trusovsky District Court, Astrakhan

60) 5 October 2021

Name: Nina Batradzovna Boronina

Punishment: unknown fine

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

Circumstances: after FSB inspection, Seventh-day Adventist charged for selling Christian literature in her gift shop; defendant argued that it was personal property which was not for sale, but occasionally given as presents; also charged under Part 3

Appeal: outcome unknown, heard on 24 January 2022 – Prokhladny District Court, Republic of Kabardino-Balkariya

61) 12 October 2021

Name: Sergey Vladimirovich Nemchinov

Punishment: none – case sent back and not resubmitted

Court: Krasnoselsky District Magistrate's Court No. 101, St. Petersburg

Circumstances: unknown

Appeal: none

62) 13 October 2021

Name: Ayrat Mukharramovich Shakirov

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Vysokaya Gora District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Tatarstan Republic

Circumstances: after prosecutor's office inspection of compliance with anti-extremism legislation (defendant found guilty in September 2020 under Administrative Code Article 20.3.1 for calling for independent Islamic Tatar state and sentenced to 40 hours' community service – also given warning re. extremist activity in June 2021), Muslim charged for preaching to c. 50 people at Friday prayers in mosque

Appeal: none

63) 28 October 2021

Name: Fyodor Nikolayevich Andronovich

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Maykop Magistrate's Court No. 3, Republic of Adygeya

Circumstances: Bishop of Russian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals) – missionary activity unknown

Appeal: successful – 23 December 2021, Maykop City Court, Republic of Adygeya

64) 8 November 2021

Name: Inna Aleksandrovna Vlaskina

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: Snezhinsk Magistrate's Court No. 2, Chelyabinsk Region

Circumstances: Pentecostal Christian charged for reading prayers, psalms, and the Bible, performing karaoke, and "discussing and explaining" religious texts among non-members of the religious association, without authorisation from a religious group or

submission of notification of the existence of a religious group; judge acknowledges 2018 Constitutional Court definition (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377) but concludes that defendant's actions do meet criteria; defendant also admits guilt; unclear who non-members were.

Appeal: none

65) 18 November 2021

Name: A. Zh. Shermatova

Punishment: none – case closed for unknown reasons

Court: Surgut Magistrate's Court No. 12, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region

Circumstances: unknown

Appeal: none

66) 19 November 2021

Part 5

Name: Saddarbek Uulu Umar

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

Court: Vidnovsky District Court, Moscow Region

Circumstances: same case as Abdumazhit (below); Muslim and Kyrgyz citizen charged for teaching children about Islam on residential premises, without written authorisation from a religious organisation, "in conditions of free access to this building of an unlimited circle of persons, i.e. among persons who are not members of [the] religious organisation, aimed at disseminating information about the beliefs professed by this religious organisation"; judge acknowledges 2018 Constitutional Court definition (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377), but notes that defendant was in a private home, where missionary activity is prohibited

Appeal: none

67) 19 November 2021

Part 5

Name: Ruslanbek Uulu Abdumazhit

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

Court: Vidnovsky District Court, Moscow Region

Circumstances: same case as Umar (above); Muslim and Kyrgyz citizen charged for teaching children about Islam on residential premises, without written authorisation from a religious organisation, "in conditions of free access to this building of an unlimited circle of persons, i.e. among persons who are not members of [the] religious organisation, aimed at disseminating information about the beliefs professed by this religious organisation"; judge acknowledges 2018 Constitutional Court definition (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377), but notes that defendant was in a private home, where missionary activity is prohibited

Appeal: none

68) Unknown date, December 2021

Name: Roman Segula

Punishment: 5,000 Roubles

Court: unknown Magistrate's Court, Kemerovo

Circumstances: pastor of Protestant "New Church" charged after inspection by Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre officials for holding worship services in rented premises and advertising them on social media, without having submitted notification of the existence of a religious group

Appeal: none

69) 7 December 2021

Name: Alavudin Magamedaliyevich Abdullayev

Punishment: unknown fine

Court: Anapa District Magistrate's Court No. 3, Krasnodar Region

Circumstances: leader of religious group "Muslims of Anapa Resort Town" charged by prosecutor for unspecified missionary activity

Appeal: none

70) 15 December 2021

Name: Gamzat Zurkanoyevich Magomedov

Punishment: 25,000 Roubles

Court: Maykop City Court, Republic of Adygeya

Circumstances: Muslim charged by officer of Interior Ministry Counter-Extremism Centre for distributing copies of As-salam Islamic newspaper near Maykop Central Market, "not being a member of any religious organisation"; defence refers to 2018 Constitutional Court clarification (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2377) but judge concludes that defendant's actions meet definition of missionary activity; higher penalty imposed for repeat offence

Appeal: lodged on 24 February 2022, Supreme Court of Republic of Adygeya

71) 27 December 2021

Name: Yevgeny Rinatovich Mamatbagin

Punishment: none – statute of limitations

Court: Central District Magistrate's Court No. 1, Chelyabinsk

Circumstances: Society for Krishna Consciousness adherent charged by police for handing out religious literature in the street, without authorisation from a religious organisation

Appeal: unsuccessful (by defence, in order to prove innocence) – 5 March 2022, Central District Court, Chelyabinsk

(END)

More reports on freedom of thought, conscience and belief in Russia (<https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?country=10>)

For background information, see Forum 18's survey of the general state of freedom of religion and belief in Russia (https://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 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2215)

A personal commentary by the Director of the SOVA Center for Information and Analysis (<https://www.sova-center.ru>), Alexander Verkhovsky, about the systemic problems of Russian "anti-extremism" laws (https://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 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1351)

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