

In Russia Another Tafsir of the Qur'an is Banned

“Samarskoe Obozreniye” reported that in November 2020 the Krasnoglinsky court of Samara declared extremist and banned the popular among Muslims tafsir of the Qur'an translated by Elmir Kuliev into Russian. According to the publication, the search for signs of extremism in the two tafsirs of the Qur'an began in the spring of 2016, after the elimination of the so-called “illegal” Muslim prayer house, where a lot of Islamic literature was confiscated by the special forces in the village of Krasny Pakhar, Samara region. The special services also reported on the seizure of explosive components, during the disposal of which, as they said, a detonation occurred, and the building itself was blown up. The parishioners of the prayer house were christened “Krasny Pakhar Jamaat”. Among the seized literature were: the tafsir of the Qur'an by the famous Islamic theologian of the XIV century Ibn Kathir, the semantic translation of the Qur'an by Elmir Kuliev and a dozen brochures “The Meaning and Sense of the Qur'an” published in Germany.

As was stated by the investigating authorities, *“according to psychological and linguistic examinations, certain translations (interpretations) of the seized religious literature contain signs of psychological influence on the reader in order to establish a hostile attitude towards a group of persons on a religious basis, as well as statements of an extremist orientation.”* According to the experts, the texts contain *“distorted interpretations”* and some phrases added by the translator. According to the law enforcement officers, *“the content of the books does not correspond to historical facts and calls on Muslims to take extremist actions against representatives of the other religious confessions.”* The work “The Meaning and Sense of the Qur'an”, according to the investigation, *“is filled with the comments of the ideologue of the international terrorist organization Muslim Brothers, an Egyptian writer and philosopher Sayyid Qutb, who was sentenced to death on charges of preparing the assassination of the Egyptian President and other senior officials.”*

Let us recall that this is not the first attempt to ban this three-volume edition. In 2017, the Volga Transport Prosecutor's Office filed a complaint with the court, demanding to ban six books:

- 1) Three volumes of "Interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. (Author - Abd ar-Rahman al-Saadi, translated from Arabic by E. Kuliev);
- 2) The Collection of sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad - "Sahih al-Bukhari (summary)" (translated from Arabic by A. Nirsch);
- 3) "Gardens of the Righteous" (Imam an-Nawawi Moscow, 2008);
- 4) "Bulugal-Maram. Achieving the goal in understanding the foundations of Shariah" (author - Ibn Hajar al-Askalyani, translated from Arabic by E. Kuliev, Moscow, 2008).

In January 2019, the court appointed expert examinations of the texts. In the summer of 2019, a second expert examination was appointed, and the process was postponed for another year. And on August 18, 2020, the same judge Irina Shchetinkina ruled the case, recognizing the second and third volumes of the tafsir of Ibn Kathir and the interpretation of the Qur'an al-Saadi in Kuliev's translation as extremist - a total of 2017 pages of the texts. On November 10, 2020, the above court decision banning two tafsirs of the Qur'an was appealed by the publishers' lawyers. The date of the revision of the decision by a higher court is not yet known.

The practice of banning Islamic literature in Russia under the pretext of having extremism in it has long become commonplace. A significant part of the federal list of extremist literature is Islamic literature, and this list is constantly being added with this literature. There are already thousands of items on the list. For a long time, all fundamental Islamic literature, which is the main source of understanding of Islam in general, has been banned. They include different versions of the Qur'an translations, several versions of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), collections of his sayings, a collection of prayers, etc.

At the same time, the position of the SAM RT is interesting, in particular, the statement of its chairman Kamil Samigullin: he warned Muslims of Tatarstan against reading, storing prohibited literature and urged them to check the contents of their libraries with the federal list of extremist materials and get rid of such books. "The Spiritual Muslim Board of Tatarstan asks Muslims to check their home libraries with the current list of extremist literature and get rid of prohibited books," the appeal says.

Such actions of the SAM RT do not surprise many Muslims in Russia at all, because they know that the structure of the muftiate was established by Catherine II in 1788 in order to form pro-Russian views among Muslim peoples in the territory of the Volga region and the Urals colonized by Russia. Political analysts believe that the call for the cleaning of home libraries is a call to observe the Moscow colonization censorship.

It should be noted that in addition to the tafsirs of the Qur'an, that reliable historical literature, which reveals the falsity of the thesis about the so-called voluntary entry of the peoples of the Volga region into Russia, and about the "peaceful coexistence of confessions" in Tatarstan, sheds light on terror, genocide and repression against the Tatar Muslim people, as well as the purposeful assimilation of the Tatars was also banned. A striking example of this is the book of the famous Tatar writer Vakhit Imamov "The Hidden History of the Tatars".

In the opinion of the independent historians and theologians, Russia's struggle with Islam is a historical and centuries-old phenomenon. And the prohibition of Islamic and reliable historical literature is part of the assimilation policy of the occupiers. Today, there is a return of the majority of the Muslim population of Russia to their religion, which forces the authorities in every possible way to fight this phenomenon. Hence there is a ban on Islamic books, fabrication of repressions against active Muslims calling for Islam, massive incitement of Islamophobia in society through anti-Islamic propaganda under the slogan of "fighting extremism and terrorism".

But the efforts of those who fight against Islam are in vain; they cannot darken the light of truth and keep the sincere sons of our people in the darkness of disbelief.

Allah in the Qur'an says:

﴿يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَن يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

"They seek to extinguish the light of Allah by blowing through their mouths; but Allah refuses everything except that He will perfect His light howsoever the unbelievers might abhor it." [9:32].

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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