

The Persecution of Islamic Dawah Carriers in Russia

By: Muhammad Mansur

From 23 to 25 May, Human Rights Center “Memorial” in cooperation with “Novaya Gazeta”, with the expert support of the International Crisis Group, held in Moscow a forum entitled **“Problems and best practices to counteract the radicalization of the part of the youth in the North Caucasus”**. The event was attended by the prominent human rights defenders, lawyers, scientists and journalists. The main theme of the event was repressions by the security forces against Muslims both in the North Caucasus and throughout Russia in general. The participants of the event spoke out in the light of the idea that the “radicalization” of the Muslims in Russia is due to the repressive policy of the regime and the constant violation of the rights of Muslims—tortures, fabrication of criminal cases, persecutions for beliefs, prohibitions on activities of Islamic organizations, etc.

The participants of the forum have not also ignored the persecutions of the Islamic dawah carriers for the revival of the Islamic way of life – members of Hizb ut Tahrir, who are in the first place in Russia in terms of the level of persecution and its mass character, and even make up a great part of the political prisoners database drawn up by human rights activists. Thus, **Irina Starodubrovskaya**, the head of the scientific direction “Political Economy and Regional Development” of the Gaidar Institute, said: *“For example, there are people who want to build the caliphate ... If they want this and do not take action to establish it here and nor through violence, then, as radicals in thinking, they cannot be considered extremists”*. **Oleg Orlov**, a board member of the HRC “Memorial”, also said that the views of the supporters of the caliphate should not be regarded as a crime: *“I believe that if people consider that the best system for them, for example, is the caliphate, and by clarification, the whole society will arrive at this sooner or later, then their desires cannot be considered as radical views”*.

However, despite the constant and active objections of human rights defenders, journalists and experts, the persecution on charges of involvement in Hizb ut Tahrir is constantly escalating. To date, the number of people imprisoned under this article of the Russian Criminal Code is estimated at hundreds of people throughout the country. The prison sentences for the accused in membership in Hizb ut Tahrir can reach life imprisonment! Even mass murderers, rapists, cannibals and pedophiles are not sentenced to such sentences in Russia.

At the same time, every month the Russian authorities more and more introduce new laws against the Islamic dawah carriers. Thus, on May 18, the Russian parliament adopted in the third reading a bill introducing administrative supervision over the released citizens who were convicted under terrorist and extremist articles. This law establishes an administrative supervision for the citizens convicted of grave and especially serious crimes of a terrorist and extremist nature. Under supervision, a citizen must check in one to four times a month in the police, he can also be restricted by movement around the country and forbidden to leave the city or leave the house at a certain time. It is noteworthy that this draft law was submitted to the State Duma in 2014. “Many of those convicted of such crimes do not stop their extremist activities after their release: about 70% of the released supporters of radical structures take part in extremist actions”, the explanatory note to the draft law prepared by the State Duma Committee on Security and Combating Corruption says. Alexander Verkhovskiy, the head of the information-analytical center “Sova”, believes that this law will affect the convicts for reposting in social networks and the convicted for participation in Hizb ut Tahrir. “They (the convicted for reposting) were followed in number by the members of organizations banned in Russia, mainly Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami”. The remaining categories are rather few”.

Russia continues its crimes against Muslims both within its territory and beyond its borders. This historical hatred that the Russian state experiences towards Muslims has been manifested for centuries in all of its colonialist wars both in the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as in the Volga region, Siberia and the Urals. Yet despite all this hatred against Islam, we see so called leaders of Muslim countries rush to seek the pleasure of the tyrant Putin instead of defending the Deen and the Ummah.

The oppression of Muslims by Russia can be stopped solely through the revival of the Khilafah (Caliphate), which will unite all the Islamic Ummah around itself and return the former greatness to Islam and believers, will lead them out of the humiliation to which they are now widely exposed. Allah Almighty said: ﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ﴾ **“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah”** [3:110].