

Memorial has recognized defendants in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir¹ in Sevastopol as political prisoners

Memorial Human Rights Center considers four people who were the first to be arrested in Crimea in the case of the organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, which has been banned in Russia, to be political prisoners: Ruslan Zeitullaev, Ferat Saifullaev, Rustem Vaitov and Yury Primov. The North-Caucasus Military Court sentenced Zeitullaev to **seven years** in a general regime prison colony under Article 205.5, Section 1, of the Russian Criminal Code ('Organization of activity of an organization that under Russian law has been found to be terrorist'), and sentenced the other defendants to **five years** in a general regime prison colony under Section 2 of the same Article ('Participation in activity of an organization that under Russian law has been found to be terrorist').

We have regularly said that there were not sufficient grounds for the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation to designate Hizb ut-Tahrir as a terrorist organization. At present there is not a single instance of the commission or preparation by participants in the organization in question of terrorist acts in any part of the world, including in the Middle East. In the countries of Western Europe and North America the party has not been banned (with the exception of Germany, where there is a ban under administrative, but not criminal, law). At the same time, the charges of very serious crimes are based precisely on what is, in our opinion, a ruling by the Supreme Court that is unsupported by evidence. The defendants in the given case have been accused only of membership of Hizb ut-Tahrir, reading Islamic literature, and communication among each other. There is no evidence that the defendants represent a danger to the public.

Moreover, it is an important factor that Crimea is, in our view, a territory occupied by Russia. In accordance with international humanitarian law, Russia is limited in its legislative and administrative powers. Russia does not have the right to wholly repeal the criminal law that existed on the territory prior to the occupation or to replace it with Russian law. In the framework of Ukrainian law, the activity of Hizb ut-Tahrir is wholly lawful.

We would point out that the case in question is the first of three criminal cases brought against Crimean Tatars under anti-terrorist laws, and is part of the repressive campaign being carried out on the occupied peninsula. We demand the release of Zeitullaev, Saifullaev, Vaitov and Primov.

Recognition of an individual as a political prisoner, or of a prosecution as politically motivated, does not mean that the Memorial Human Rights Centre shares or approves of the individual's views, statements or actions.

For more information about this case, visit the [website](#) of the Memorial Human Rights Centre.

PayPal – an e-wallet for giving help to all Russian political prisoners helpmemorial2016@gmail.com.

¹ An organization recognized as terrorist by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation and banned in Russia.