

Memorial considers four more participants in Hizb ut-Tahrir political prisoners*

Memorial Human Rights Centre has recognized Azizbek Inamov, Shamil Ismailov, Saipul Kurbanov and Zikrullokhon Rakhmonkhodzhaev, convicted of belonging to the banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir in Moscow in 2014, as political prisoners. These individuals were found guilty under Article 282.2 (Sections 1 and 2) (organization or participation in the activities of an extremist organization), and Articles 30 (Section 1) and 278 (preparation of a violent seizure of power or change in the constitutional order of the Russian Federation) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. The charges against Inamov, whom the investigators concluded was the leader of the group, also included Article 205.1 (Section 1) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (persuading persons to commit a crime provided for under Article 278 of the Criminal Code), while the charge against Rakhmonkhodzhaev included Article 222 (Section 1) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (illegal acquisition, transfer, sale, possession, transport or carrying of fire arms, the main parts of fire arms, or ammunition).

Those convicted were given terms in a strict regime penal colony of between 7 and 11 years, and in addition they were fined. They did not deny that they were members of the organization, but they stated that they were engaged in educational work and had no plans to seize power in the Russian Federation. Rakhmonkhodzhaev also said that the ammunition had been planted on him during a search.

We have expressed repeatedly our disagreement with the position taken by the Supreme Court in finding Hizb ut-Tahrir to be a terrorist organization. There is no evidence that this group, acting as a political party in the Middle East, has taken part in even a single act of terrorism. In the countries of Western Europe and North America the party is not banned (with the exception of Germany, where an administrative, but not a criminal, ban, that is not linked with accusations that this organization is engaged in terrorism, has been imposed on the organization).

Even if it is accepted that the goals of Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is banned in the Russian Federation, and that include the creation of a single theocratic state (in the first place on the territory of Muslim countries, and not in Russia), are undemocratic and contradict the Russian Constitution, members of this organization could have been prosecuted only under Article 282.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, the punishment for which at the time the actions in question were committed was not more than two years in prison (under this Article the defendants in the case were fined).

The more severe punishment meted out to Inamov, Ismailov, Kurbanov and Rakhmonkhodzhaev relates to the charge of preparing a violent seizure of power. In our view, this accusation is unsubstantiated and is based on manipulation of widespread misconceptions about Hizb ut-Tahrir, which has been banned in the Russian Federation, the dubious testimonies of secret witnesses, and conspiracy theories. According to the court judgment, those convicted had in the main been engaged in reading and discussing religious literature and holding conferences.

The obvious lack of proportionality of the sentence with regard to the potential danger presented to the public by those convicted, and equally the indications of fabrication of evidence of especially serious crimes, enable us to consider Inamov, Ismailov, Kurbanov and Rakhmonkhodzhaev as political prisoners, and to demand their release.

Recognition of a person as a political prisoner, or as a victim of a politically-motivated prosecution, does not mean that Memorial Human Rights Centre agrees with their views or statements, or approves of their statements or actions.

PayPal – an e-wallet for giving help to all Russian political prisoners
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More information about this [case](#) can be read on the website of the Memorial Human Rights Centre.

**The organization has been recognized by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation as a terrorist organization and prohibited in Russia.*

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