

Memorial recognizes Tyumen blogger Aleksei Kungurov as a political prisoner

On 3 March 2016 in Tyumen blogger and journalist Aleksei Kungurov was detained, and his apartment searched by the FSB for Tyumen region, in the framework of a criminal case related to public justification of terrorism. The next day he was released under travel restrictions. On 11 March 2016 an investigator from Tyumen FSB, A.S.Sukharev, charged Kungurov with committing a crime under Article 205.2, Section 1, (public justification of terrorism) of the Russian Criminal Code. On 15 June 2016 Kungurov was detained again, and the following day he was remanded in custody.

Aleksei Kungurov is a prominent opposition blogger, journalist and writer. He has been a fierce critic of the domestic and foreign policy of the current Russian authorities. The criminal case against him fits into the general picture of harassment of independent bloggers and journalists and is clearly unlawful. The political motive for the prosecution of Kungurov is basically set out in the official charge sheet. This states that Kungurov ‘repeatedly expressed in public political positions, views and beliefs of Russian civil society organizations, speaking and acting in opposition to the activities of State legislative, executive and judicial bodies of the Russian Federation.’

In the view of the Sova Centre, an article published by Kungurov ‘represents an analysis of the internal situation in the Middle East and does not contain, from our point of view, any incitement to terrorism.’ We are in agreement with this evaluation and consider that the sharp tone of the author’s publications in itself cannot be a basis for his prosecution.

Aleksei Kungurov is not a supporter of the banned Islamic State or other terrorist organizations active on the territory of Syria. To all intents and purposes he is being prosecuted solely for his criticism of Russian foreign policy. In the text for which he is being prosecuted, Kungurov gave a negative assessment of the military intervention of the Russian Federation in the civil war in Syria from the point of view of Russian interests, considering it senseless. The theses, expressed by Kungurov, were based not on jihadist propoganda and, for all their debatable nature, are fairly widespread in global media and in the Russian blogosphere.

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.

More information about this case can be read [here](#).

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