

Memorial recognizes Dagestan imam Magomednabi Magomedov a political prisoner

Magomednabi Magomedov, imam of the Vostochnaya [Eastern] mosque in the city of Khasavyurt, has been detained by the authorities in connection with a sermon he gave about the increasing pressure on Salafi Muslims by the authorities and the closing of Salafi mosques (a video of the sermon has been posted on [YouTube](#)). He has been charged with offences under Article 205.2, Section 1 (public incitement of terrorist activities or public justification of terrorism) and Article 282, Section 1 (inciting hatred or hostility, or violation of human dignity) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. Investigators argue that Magomedov is guilty of inciting hatred against representatives of the authorities and law enforcement agencies, as well as against communists. The case is to be heard by the North Caucasus Military Court, beginning on 26 July.

We have studied the video recording of Magomedov's sermon and consider that it does not contain any calls to acts of violence, still less acts of terrorism. Magomedov accuses law enforcement officers, in language that is not insulting, of violating the law and of crimes relating to their official functions - something that is an inalienable right of every citizen and cannot be considered a criminal act. The charge of inciting hatred of communists is simply comical: Magomedov cites the historical fact of the disappearance of the Soviet state which, in his opinion, was inevitable, given the persecution of Muslims. He places all hopes for the restoration of justice on Allah, and urges the members of the congregation to join together to support each other.

Magomedov's arrest had been preceded by a demonstration against the closing of the Severnaya [Northern] mosque in which he took part, and also, according to some media reports, threats by law enforcement agencies. Immediately before his detention Magomedov had himself gone to the police station in the city's Makhachkala district in an effort to resolve a conflict between police officers and members of the congregation of the Bolnichnaya [Hospital] mosque.

Memorial has already announced that it considers the detention of Magomed to be a provocation against a lawful representative of the moderate Salafi movement that is working to lower the level of radicalism among the congregation and to persuade young people not to join unlawful armed groups. He is being prosecuted in relation to his exercise of the rights to freedom of speech and conscience, and his prosecution is intended to put an end to his activities that are peaceful in nature but which the republic's authorities consider undesirable.

You can read more information about the case of Magomedov on our [website](#).

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.

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