

Memorial considers Petr Parpulov a political prisoner

Petr Parpulov, an air traffic control officer from Sochi, has been sentenced to 12 years in a strict regime penal colony under Article 275 (treason) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. Parpulov was accused of having passed information in 2010 that constituted state secrets to a resident of Georgia, who in turn passed this information to the government of Georgia. According to the FSB, in this way Parpulov damaged the interests of the Russian Federation.

Parpulov was detained in March 2014. He denies the charges and says that what he said in conversation with relatives had been published on the website of the newspaper Krasnaya zvezda [Red Star], owned by the Ministry of Defence.

The trial took place in conditions of excessive secrecy, however the picture that can be built up on the basis of media publications is enough to be able to suppose with a very great degree of probability that there was no crime in Parpulov's actions. In his line of work, he never had access to state secrets and he did not suppose that he could access secret information on a website. The court did not show that Parpulov had a motive for the crime he allegedly committed, nor the harm allegedly caused to Russia. The secrecy of the information was established by reference to a secret decree of the Ministry of Defence to which neither defendant nor his lawyer had access.

We believe that the case of Parpulov has become one of a series of criminal cases brought in large numbers in the years 2013-2015 under Article 275 (treason) and Article 276 (espionage) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation as part of a campaign by the authorities (among these cases are those of Ekaterina Kharebava (<http://memohrc.org/special-projects/delo-ekateriny-harebava>) , Svetlana Davydova, Gennady Kravtsov (<http://memohrc.org/special-projects/delo-kravcova> and others)). The sharp rise in convictions for 'espionage' is a consequence of deliberate government policy and propaganda, creating in society a war-time atmosphere, accompanied by the search for a 'fifth column' and 'enemies of the state'.

Petr Parpulov is 60 years old, he suffers from a number of chronic illnesses.

We demand the release of Parpulov and an end to the fabrication of cases of treason and espionage.

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](#).