

Memorial considers Tomsk blogger Vadim Tyumentsev a political prisoner

On December 30, 2015 judge at Tomsk's Kirovsky district court Yekaterina Galyatudinova sentenced Vadim Tyumentsev to five years of imprisonment in a general-regime colony.

He was convicted under part 2, article 280 (public calls for extremism with the use of the internet; up to five years in prison) and part 1, article 282 (actions aimed at inciting hatred or enmity, and also at insulting the dignity of a person or group of people on the basis of their ethnicity or heritage; up to four years in prison). The reason for bringing the case was the publication of two clips on YouTube and Tyumentsev's personal page on VKontakte: "Day of people's anger in Tomsk against the lawlessness of officials and minibus drivers" and "Residents of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts – out of Tomsk!".

From our point of view, within the framework of current legislation in this case one can even theoretically talk only about the use of article 282 and only for the clip "Residents of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts – out of Tomsk!". At the same time we do not claim that Tyumentsev is guilty of committing a crime envisaged under this article.

At the same time the volume of the charges has been artificially overblown. The charges under articles 280 and 282 are based on the same arguments, from which there follows double punishment for the same action. Tyumentsev's right to a defence was limited. His interests were represented by a lawyer appointed by the court. Meanwhile the court rejected two people outright who wanted to be Tyumentsev's public defender pro bono. In addition a non-disclosure agreement was extracted from his lawyer. In our view, the limits on the openness of this trial were unjustified.

The punishment in the form of five years of imprisonment is blatantly inappropriate to both the possible real and the claimed public danger that Tyumentsev posed.

The Memorial human rights centre demands the cancellation of the sentence that was passed.

Recognising a person as a political prisoner does not mean that the Memorial human rights centre agrees with his views or statements, or that it approves of his statements or actions.

More details about the case of Tyumentsev and the position of the Memorial human rights centre can be found on our website.