

Xenophobia,
Freedom of Conscience
and Anti-Extremism
in Russia in 2008

**A collection of annual reports
by the SOVA Center for Information and Analysis**

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X44 **Xenophobia, Freedom of Conscience and Anti-Extremism in Russia in 2008: A collection of annual reports by the SOVA Center for Information and Analysis** / [Verkhovsky Alexander, Kozhevnikova Galina, Sibireva Olga; translation – I. Savelieva, S. Rock] – M.: SOVA Center, 2009. – 155 pp.: tables (Academic publication).

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This collection of reports summarizes all the major areas of work addressed by the SOVA Center for Information and Analysis in 2007, in a similar fashion to the collection of reports issued a year ago.

There are four reports on themes which have become traditional for the SOVA Center in this collection:

The first report addresses radical nationalism and hate crime, and the efforts of government and society to combat these phenomena.

The second report addresses problems relating to the freedom of conscience in contemporary Russia.

The third report addresses the misuse and abuse of ‘anti-extremism’ measures.

The fourth report addresses the issue of Hate Language in the Russian mass media. The report is based on the monitoring carried out between September 2007 and March 2008 in Moscow and several other regions.

The appendices provide details about hate crimes and the prosecution of such crimes, and lists of organizations deemed extremist. All data were compiled at the end of March – beginning of April 2009.

This translation of the published Russian text uses a modified Library of Congress system of transliteration for names and publications, except where there is an established alternative spelling (e.g. Yeltsin, not El'tsin, Yabloko, not Iabloko).

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Radical nationalism in Russia in 2008, and efforts to counteract it

Summary

2008 was a very intensive year in terms of manifestations of radical nationalism and efforts by government and society to counteract it.¹

Racist and neo-Nazi violence continues to escalate, although it is becoming more difficult to uncover information about this. However, Russian society is clearly losing interest in such crimes and media coverage of them has decreased, the political authorities remain uninterested in making this information available, and often the ultra-right activists themselves do everything they can to disguise their racist activities as ordinary crimes, thereby ensuring they go unnoticed by outside observers.

The nature of racist attacks is clearly changing: we are more often seeing the use of explosives and firearms. Religious and ideologically-motivated vandalism is becoming more aggressive – perpetrators are more often turning from the drawing of insulting graffiti to arson and explosions. We have also witnessed the increased use of diverse provocations to fan xenophobic hysteria in society and to provoke discriminatory actions from the authorities. The number of xenophobic attacks committed by ordinary people (as opposed to organized groups) has grown, as has the number of mass fights which have grown into (or which have threatened to grow into) ethnic pogroms.

It now seems certain that a wide network of neo-Nazi groups, able to coordinate actions, is operating at least in the major cities of Russia. The image of the ultra-right movement is changing in the eyes of those young people not involved in it: it has become not only aesthetically attractive, but is also perceived as a means of social realization.

¹ Information about almost all incidents mentioned in this collection has been published on the SOVA Center website (<http://sova-center.ru>) and for brevity's sake, links to SOVA pages are not included here. Citations for all other sources are provided. In the preparation of this report, in addition to the monitoring conducted by the SOVA Center, we used regional papers on the problem of radical nationalism and its counteraction prepared as part of the Moscow Helsinki Group's monitoring project. These materials are available from the author.

A few newly-emerged radical-nationalist groups representing minorities uniting around a regional identity ('Caucasus') were more active than in 2007. And although already by midsummer their activities were less evident, this phenomenon is cause for serious concern, not only because of their violent crimes, but because the very existence of such groups encourages the justification of crimes committed by ultra-right groups in people's minds.

Major changes took place within the ultra-right movement. A split in the Movement Against Illegal Migration (*Dvizhenie protiv nelegalnoi immigratsii*, DPNI), and a whole series of less significant conflicts, triggered a crisis within the ultra-right sector which has yet to be resolved.

We continue to document xenophobic remarks by government representatives. The number of such utterances is not growing, and this is especially reassuring given the background of the war in South Ossetia. However, in the second half of 2008 the pro-Kremlin youth movements became vastly more active, practically embarking on a straightforward competition with ultra-right groups in terms of fanning anti-migrant (and occasionally openly racist) hysteria.

We observe a significant qualitative and quantitative improvement in the legal prosecution of violent crimes and fast growth in the number of criminal proceedings against xenophobic propaganda. Analysis of law enforcement practice debunks a whole series of myths, in particular about the hypothetical racism of jurors and the absence of a legislative basis for the prosecution of hate propaganda on the internet.

However, in terms of the prosecution of propaganda, it is firstly evident that the focus has shifted onto less significant crimes, and secondly that the current increase in the number of criminal proceedings against racists (including against those committing violent crimes) nevertheless falls calamitously short of the levels necessary to impact upon the ultra-right's illegal activity in any noticeable way.

Manifestations of radical nationalism

Violence

In 2008 no less than 525 people were the victims of racist and xenophobic violence, 97 of whom died. This is the most conservative estimation of violence, as incidents originating in the republics of the north Caucasus,²

² The situation in the North Caucasus is closely monitored by the Human Rights Centre 'Memorial', and the site *Kavkazskii uzel*. We do not include events in this region in our monitoring because we believe that our methods of selecting information would be ineffective for this region.

mass brawls, attacks with mercenary motives and where firearms are used (except where a racist motive has been clearly recognized by law-enforcement agencies) and other disputable cases have been excluded completely from our reckoning. Additionally, we traditionally exclude homeless victims of neo-Nazi violence from the total number of victims, given that it is very hard to ascertain the motivation behind such attacks. However we know of at least seven murders and one case of assault in which a motive of hatred is suspected or imputed.

Altogether, racist and neo-Nazi motivated attacks were recorded by us in 44 regions of Russia. As before, the main centers of violence are the Moscow region (57 dead and 196 injured) and the Petersburg region (15 dead and 38 injured). After a two-year break, neo-Nazis re-emerged in Voronezh (2 dead and 18 injured), which once again took third place in this sad ratings competition. Traditionally, Nazi-skinheads have been active in Sverdlovsk and Nizhnii Novgorod regions. Penza became new hotbed of activity in the year just past (14 injured). Previously in this region either there were no attacks recorded, or such attacks were isolated events.

The main victims of xenophobic aggression are natives of Central Asia (49 dead, 108 injured) and of the Caucasus (23 dead, 72 injured). However, practically no one with non-Slavic features is immune to assault by racists, nor are representatives of leftist youth movements and alternative youth sub-cultures (punks, Goths, emos etc) whom neo-Nazis consider 'traitors to the white race'.

For comparison, 85 people were killed and 605 people injured in 2007. However, we may hardly consider this a decrease in the extent of the violence: there is no doubt that this is the result of a dearth of information rather than a dearth of attacks. This lack of information is linked to the political motives of those in power, who deny the problem of xenophobia; with the 'acquired tolerance' of the mass media, which has become inured to this issue; with the increased difficulty monitors face in identifying such crimes.

In observing the 'political' difficulties we face in accessing information, it should be noted that, for example, a period of 'absence' of hate crimes often follows immediately after announcements by high-ranking bureaucrats about the absence of this very problem, or its appearance in the sphere of their responsibilities. The clearest example of just such an information blockade is the absence of news about racist incidents in Petersburg for more than three months after the public announcement by the governor V. Matvienko that '*for the first six months of this year there was not a single incidence of a crime of extremist tendency*'. The city prosecutor's official figures on numbers of such incidents had been published shortly before her announcement.

There are also less transparent examples. In 2008 only one racist attack was recorded in the traditionally unfortunate Krasnodar region,³ for example, and it is unlikely that this can be explained by anything other than the local authorities' concerns about the region's image given the prospect of hosting the Olympics.

Besides politics, one may observe another socio-psychological reason: there were so many racist killings in 2008, especially at the start of the year, that simple attacks are already no longer perceived as newsworthy. Society's increasing immunity to routine violence of such type, in turn, provokes neo-Nazis to commit 'showy' actions, intended to outshine less demonstrative (although no less cruel) attacks.

We observe a substantial reduction in information about attacks on representatives of leftist youth movements and groups offering an alternative to the Nazi-skinhead subculture (previously this category of victims constituted from a quarter to a third of all victims, now it does not exceed 16%). However, it is difficult to imagine that neo-Nazis are attacking the 'informals' less often – more likely something else is happening. Antifascist youth, embroiled in these quarrels, are evidently disillusioned about the effectiveness of the anti-fascist actions of the state and have begun to perceive fights with Nazi-skinheads simply as episodes in a long-running street war, in which neither side wants to reveal the number of their casualties. Therefore the overwhelming majority of victims who are known about in this category are chance victims: not anti-fascists, but fans of music groups popular in the anti-fascist milieu. And they became victims precisely because they did not perceive attendance at a concert as an action for which it is necessary to take precautionary measures. Thus, for example, was Aleksei Krylov killed in Moscow, not for being an active anti-fascist but simply because he was going to a concert in a small party, at a time when – to those in anti-fascist circles at least – it was clear that neo-Nazi attacks were a possibility. A whole series of attacks were carried out in September and October in Izhevsk, Ekaterinburg, Vladivostok and other towns specifically on concert audiences, not on those conducting anti-fascist activities.

But the most important reason for the reduction in information about racist incidents, without doubt, is the transfiguration of these very incidents, now increasingly often and carefully disguised as common 'fights while protecting girls from hooligans' (and there is evidence to suggest that a number of these

³ 11 in 2007. The attack on two Chechen youths on 27 May 2008, which resulted in the death of one victim, was not officially recognised as racist. However, both eyewitnesses and neo-Nazis declare that Nazi-skinheads were involved in this crime. [From MHG monitoring in Krasnodar region.]

scenarios are played out quite deliberately), burglary, robbery, etc. Evidently neo-Nazis realize that they are less likely to be sought out for 'ordinary' assaults than for attacks which are initially deemed racist.

At the same time, the behavior of many neo-Nazis whilst under arrest has changed: they do not deny the motive of hate, do not attempt to reduce everything to 'hooliganism', more often openly declare the racist nature of their actions and even – in some cases – claim responsibility for more crimes than they have actually committed.

The change in behavior whilst under arrest, it seems to us, is a result of changes which have happened in the ultra-right sphere, as to its image, in the last few years. A long prison term is now, for some, an acceptable price to pay for increased status in this sphere. The ultra-right is perceived as an alternative and to a significant degree autonomous sphere with its own infrastructure (its own enterprises, financial and intellectual resources, the possibility of legal support to those suspected of crimes) and the ability to meet the needs of its members, and in part this is indeed the case. The needs met are the most diverse, from providing employment to providing legal support and contacts in the place of imprisonment in the case of prosecution. Precisely because of this sphere's autonomy, one may suggest that external factors (such as the economic crisis which began in autumn 2008) are not able to influence the level of racist attacks perpetrated by core Nazi-skinheads.

Part of this sphere is an organized network of small groups, able to coordinate demonstrative actions. It became possible to talk about this with certainty from the end of 2007 - beginning of 2008, when Moscow was swamped by a whole series of murders and assaults, crimes which – as a rule – happened precisely in those regions where Nazi-skinheads had been arrested very recently.

However, both organized underground actions and 'community defense' carried out by ultra-right activists are possible only in cases where the perpetrators are 'part of a system' (really only someone with a particularly 'heroic' image can be considered an exception, which explains the efforts of several arrested neo-Nazis to claim responsibility for as many crimes as possible). It seems likely that the 'system' is one of the reasons for the increase in 'crimes committed according to instructions' – attacks which are committed, as a rule, by adolescents still not incorporated into the ultra-right sphere but sympathizing with it and trying to become part of it. They carry out demonstrative attacks, which emphasize their exact following of general instructions or descriptions of concrete assaults disseminated on right-wing radical websites. For example, on August 10 on a Moscow suburban train an attack on a person of non-Slavic appearance was clearly carried out 'according to instructions': under false pretences a few people were provoked into a fight, as a result of which everyone the attackers

considered non-Slavic was beaten, and it was simultaneously explained to the rest of the passengers that this was being done ‘in the interests of the Russian people’. A whole series of crimes, which have not been included in our statistics of racist incidents, closely resemble those ‘initiations into the skinhead movement’ which were widespread five or six years ago, when a single individual, for no apparent reason, would attack a person of non-Slavic appearance while his potential ‘comrades in arms’ observed. According to the victim there is only one attacker, and if he is not seized by chance by the police and doesn’t openly declare his racism, such a crime is unlikely to be deemed a hate crime either by the police or by experts researching the problem of racism.

Besides the above-described new phenomena emerging in 2008, practically all tendencies observed in recent years have continued and been strengthened.

There is a clearly stable trend towards the emergence of aggressive groups of ‘potential victims’. Currently in Moscow these are groups of youth from the Caucasus. Experts predicted the emergence of such groups several years ago: in the absence of an adequate reaction to hate crimes, and the possibility of discrimination on the part of the law enforcement bodies, potential victims themselves begin to present as aggressive. Moreover, this will be the action of individuals, as well as organized groups. The appearance of such groups of youth from the Caucasus became evident back in 2007, when there were several mass brawls in Moscow. Thanks to the incompetence of the mass media such groups are now being called ‘skinheads from the Caucasus’, however this is fundamentally wrong. These groups only copy the behavior of Nazi-skinheads: attacking patently weaker opponents, provoking aggression, filming fights and assaults on video which are subsequently posted on the internet, conducting mini-marches with cries of ‘Caucasus! Caucasus!’. However, in contrast to Nazi-skinheads, they are united not only by racist ideas, but also by a ‘victim complex’ – together with some sort of nationalist ideology. The latter may be deduced from the fact that these groups are consolidated not by an ethnic or religious principle, but by a regional one – ‘people from the Caucasus’, ‘Caucasians’ – this is precisely how neo-Nazis identify their victims. The attacks themselves are motivated as ‘attacks on skinheads’. In reality, as a rule, the victims are random, they are just ‘taken for neo-Nazis’. The emergence of such groups undoubtedly only increases the real level of racist violence. Moreover, it leads to a further general growth of Caucasus-phobia and to the justification of Nazi-skinhead violence against ‘aliens’ by society.

The neo-Nazis are gaining increasing experience in terrorism. It is very difficult to evaluate the numerical growth of incidents involving explosives, especially because it is sometimes impossible to understand the logic of the ‘bomb

technicians’,⁴ but the number of such episodes is clearly growing. In particular, we are aware of no less than ten explosions or attempted explosions in which the involvement of neo-Nazis is suspected in Moscow and Moscow region alone in 2008.⁵ We recorded only six such incidents in 2007 (in Moscow region and in Petersburg). For the first time we can, with certainty, report the participation of activists from the DPNI in at least the production of explosives. In April 2008 one of them set off an explosion in a flat on Korolev street, as a result of which three people died, including the owner of the flat. The initial version of the tragedy was the careless handling of a gas appliance, but by the end of the year it was officially announced that a home-made bomb had detonated.

As before, flagrantly exhibitionist crimes were committed, aimed at overcoming the information blockade. If in 2007 these constituted the double murder filmed on video and disseminated over the internet, then in 2008 it was the murder of a Tajik worker and the subsequent mailing of threatening letters and photographs of the victim’s severed head to bureaucrats’ addresses. Other less resonant crimes also belong in this category. A video clip of the murder of a Chinese native by Nazi-skinheads, committed at the end of September 2008, was disseminated on the internet after the law enforcement bodies of Cheliabinsk region announced that they were sure the murder was an ‘ordinary’ one, thus refuting the official statement of the prosecutor’s office.

The ‘Kondopoga scenario’

The number of major ethnically colored conflicts developing out of everyday incidents has grown. Every time, ultra-right groups attempt to use them to realize a ‘Kondopoga scenario’. In previous years we have become aware of three such conflicts annually. In 2008 there were no less than five such incidents in the regions of Krasnodar, Perm, Moscow, Rostov and Volgograd. We will focus on three of the biggest incidents, in which the participation of right-wing radicals was most noticeable.

In Belorechensk (Krasnodar region) a fight at a disco between groups of Russian and Armenian youths, which took place on 1 January and resulted in

⁴ The bombing of a sex shop at the end of 2007 for example, which neo-Nazis are now charged with, was motivated by the belief that such products ‘pervert the nation’.

⁵ At least one of the terrorist attacks (the explosion at the Evrokafe on Izmailovskaia street) has already been investigated, and the case against two Nazi-skinheads went to court. At the end of December 2008, neo-Nazis issued statements claiming that the ‘comrades-in-arms’ of the Cherkizovo bomber Nikolai Korolev had participated in almost all the explosions in Moscow markets in 2008 (we know of at least four). In January 2009 a group of radical neo-pagans was arrested on suspicion of participation in five incidents involving the use of explosives in 2008–2009.

the death of a Russian youth, provided the means to inflame tensions. The local DPNI and even activists from Adygeia (North Caucasus) swiftly tapped into the conflict. Leaflets agitating against people from the Caucasus began to appear in the town, and the local newspaper failed to find a better way of describing the situation than reprinting material from the DPNI website.⁶ However, it is worth noting that the Moscow DPNI activists joined the conflict far later – a month after the fight. At the same time it is worth observing that the main reaction of local and regional authorities to the conflict in Belorechensk, as in the majority of such cases, was to deny that it had taken place. The attempts by independent human rights groups to make sense of events must be acknowledged as unsuccessful – their observers were detained by the police.⁷

In the Moscow village of Lunevo an obviously ordinary fight between local inhabitants and builders from Central Asia in September 2008, as a result of which three Lunevo residents received knife wounds, served as the conduit for confrontation. One of those wounded died instantly, another died on the way to the hospital. Despite the fact that the murder suspects were almost immediately detained, the situation in the village deteriorated to such an extent that building firms had to evacuate their building sites during working hours for security reasons (however, according to some evidence several workers were nevertheless the victim of racist attacks). Although activists from the DPNI and Russian All-National Union (*Russkii obshchenatsional'nyi soiuz*, RONS) tapped into the conflict, escalation was avoided by the implementation of security measures (the strengthening of police patrols, the evacuation of building sites).

In Karagai (Perm region) the confrontation was started by a mass brawl in one of the village cafes in August 2008. The conflict fairly quickly grew into a mass battle between groups of Chechen and Russian local inhabitants. Moreover, having been stopped by police, the battle continued in the casualty department where the injured had been carried. According to the local media, the conflict was made worse by superfluous 'victims' resulting from an industrial incident which had happened several days previously. The local media further inflamed ethnic tensions by reporting that ethnic Chechens serving in the local police force failed to do their duty during the conflict. As in the first two cases, the DPNI swiftly sought to make use of the situation. However, in contrast to the standard blockade of official information, which leads to the ultra-right's interpretations of events dominating the information sphere, we also know about Karagai from alternative sources. In Perm region there are strong independent

⁶ For this publication the newspaper received an 'anti-extremism' warning, completely – in our opinion – lawfully.

⁷ Material from MHG's monitoring in Krasnodar region.

NGOs which fairly swiftly joined in investigating the conflict, and published an analysis of the situation. We note also the operative intervention in the situation by Tatiana Margolina, the regional ombudswoman on Human Rights.⁸ It should be emphasized that both the authorities and human rights organizations reacted very quickly to the plainly unreliable information disseminated by local media, some of which had adopted an openly anti-Chechen (or, more broadly, anti-Caucasus) position.⁹ The behavior of the authorities, in refuting the open lies of unprincipled journalists, is fairly rare, and deserves public recognition.

Threats to civil society activists

The practice of publicly threatening civil society activists linked in some manner with the problem of xenophobia was resumed in 2008. Thus, in February–March, the latest list of 'enemies of the Russian people' was posted on the internet. This list included the personal details not only of those individuals the ultra-rightists consider participants in anti-fascist activity, but also members of the Public Chamber, journalists, high-ranking prosecutor's officials and judges of the Supreme Court of Russia. Detailed lists have appeared on the internet more than once, but they very rarely contain personal details such as home addresses. The publication of the list was accompanied by unambiguous appeals for violence. From the summer of 2008 onwards, regular threats have been made against Alexander Bekhtol'd and Sofii Ivanova, activists in a human rights organization in Ryazan, following the publication of their home addresses.¹⁰ The Nizhnii Novgorod flat of a representative of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society, Stanislav Dmitrievskii, was also attacked that summer; windows were broken and the walls of the building in which he lives were daubed with swastikas and threats. In November 2008 threatening letters were posted to several organizations, including Ashot Airapetian's Centre of Inter-Ethnic Cooperation, in the name of the Petersburg neo-Nazi Dmitrii Borovikov – killed in 2006. And

⁸ For further detail about the conflict in Karagai see 'Karagai: bytovye konflikty, mekhanizmy solidarnosti i bezotvetstvennye SMI', *Natsionalizm i ksenofobiia v Rossii*, 5 September 2008. Available from the SOVA Center website (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/45A29F2/BA8D13A>); Ombudsman Permskogo kraia: 'Liudi ne gotovy priniat' "inakovost'", *ibid.*, (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/45A2A39/BA8DFC0>).

⁹ 'Karagai i SMI: provokatsiia i neprofessionalizm', *Natsionalizm i ksenofobiia v Rossii*, 5 September 2008. Available from the SOVA Center website (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/213716E/213988B/BA8D2C6>); "Napridumyvali" do vzbuzhdeniia nenavisti?", *ibid.*, (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/45A2A1E/BA8D7E0>).

¹⁰ Bekhtol'd Alexander, Ivanova Sofii, *Preodolenie etnicheskoi diskriminatsii, rasizma, ksenofobii, neterpimosti i ekstremizma v Rossii: Situatsiia v Riazanskoi oblasti v 2008 g.* (Ryazan, 2009)

while the publication of the said list has led to the opening of a criminal case, the rest of these threats remain unnoticed by law enforcement bodies.

‘Everyday’ xenophobia and xenophobia in the army

As in previous years, we observed a whole series of attacks linked with manifestations of ‘everyday’ xenophobia. It is impossible to speak with any certainty about a growth in the number of such attacks, the more so because keeping track of such incidents is even more difficult than attacks by committed neo-Nazis. However, one can judge the growth of such incidents by indirect indicators. In particular, we first became aware of criminal convictions for ‘everyday’ xenophobic threats of murder (see below) in 2008, and we may therefore assume that the number of incidents has reached such a level that the law enforcement bodies are obliged to react. And the most famous example of ‘loner violence’ were the events that took place in August in Perm. There, over the course of several weeks, a mentally ill individual influenced by ideas of racial superiority shot passers-by of non-Slavic appearance from an improvised gun. At least one person was killed and three were seriously wounded, and it seems possible that the list of victims is far from complete. Yet another example of aggressive ‘everyday’ xenophobia is the series of robberies in one region of Moscow which took place in October. The young people detained on suspicion of the attacks themselves declared the racist motives behind their behavior.

The army is a particularly problematic zone. There is no doubt that racist conflicts occur there – conversations about army ‘communities of fellow-countrymen’ have already become routine. However, we have practically no detailed information about such incidents and this means that it is impossible to analyze the situation. We can only acknowledge the fact that even though the army is extremely closed to outside observers, cases of racist violence nevertheless become public knowledge, and we may assume that these are not rare incidents. In 2007 we managed to document only one such case (in Novosibirsk a conscript from Dagestan was convicted of a series of criminal episodes, including the incitement of hatred towards his Russian fellow-conscripts). In 2008 there were two noisy scandals, again in Novosibirsk and in Krasnodar region, about the suicides of army personnel, which resulted in the deaths of two people and the serious injury of another. It was established that the victims in these cases had been driven to such steps by racist bullying of their colleagues.

Violence motivated by religious hatred

Traditionally, violence based on religious intolerance has been marginal in terms of the proportion of incidents, and as a rule, has not displayed any systematic character. 2008 was not to prove an exception to this rule.

Two serious incidents were recorded in spring, linked with the attacks on a Protestant house of prayer: on March 21 a drunk fired pistol shots at parishioners during a service at an evangelical Christian prayer house in Chukotka; happily no one was hit. On April 2 in Kuznetsk, Penza region, several people led by one of the local criminal leaders, assaulted the pastor of the ‘Living Word’ church and threatened reprisals against parishioners. One can with a great degree of certainty suggest that in both cases the dramatic situation with the ‘Penza recluses’ was the stimulus to these assaults. As it happens, this situation became strained in the middle of March 2008, and triggered a torrent of ‘anti-sectarian’ speeches in the mass media – containing, amongst other things, direct calls to violence against the recluses.¹¹ It is, without doubt, always difficult to establish the degree to which such declarations provoke violence, but it should be pointed out that the overwhelming majority of attacks in 2008 of which we are aware, and which are clearly motivated by religious xenophobia, were recorded precisely in spring (besides Protestants, Orthodox Christians in Khabarovsk, representatives of the Society for Krishna Consciousness in Nizhnii Novgorod and a young Muslim woman in Moscow also suffered).¹²

Vandalism

The main manifestation of religious xenophobia remains the vandalism of cult objects and burial grounds. In 2008, out of a total of 86 acts of vandalism where the hate motive was clearly marked, 58 acts were committed against religious objects (in 2007 there were 88 incidents in total, 64 of which were religiously-colored). Incidents were recorded in 39 regions of Russia.

Traditionally, Jewish objects are top of the list (24 incidents, compared to 30 in 2007), followed by Orthodox Christian (19, compared to six in 2007) and six incidents apiece against Protestant (of various denominations) and Muslim objects (16 and seven respectively in 2007). 26 incidents are counted as ‘ideological’ acts of vandalism: the desecration of collective graves and memorials dedicated to the Great Patriotic War, attacks on Lenin monuments, or major

¹¹ For further detail explaining the situation with the ‘recluses’ in the mass media, see Galina Kozhevnikova, *Iazyk vrazhdy i vybory: federal’nyi i regional’nyi urovni. Po materialam monitoringa oseni-zimy 2007-2008 godov* (Moscow: SOVA Centre, 2008), pp. 102-107. Here we also note, for example, that in one of the television reports about the situation in Poganovka, a village inhabitant declared ‘poison them all with gas, like in “Nord-Ost”’.

¹² Two individuals are exceptions (an Orthodox parishioner of a Moscow church and a Muscovite who was taken for an Orthodox priest). They suffered at the hands of radical neopagans who became active in Moscow in the second half of 2008.

coordinated acts of neo-Nazi graffiti daubed on the walls of buildings. In 2007 there were six such incidents.

For the second year in a row we see a reduction in the number of antisemitic acts of vandalism, and a stabilization in the number of anti-Islamic acts. On the other hand we see sharp fluctuations in the number of acts of vandalism against Orthodox Christian and Protestant targets. There were 12 acts of vandalism against Orthodox targets in 2006, six in 2007 and 19 in 2008. Against Protestant targets of various denominations we recorded fluctuations in the opposite direction – eight in 2006, 16 in 2007 and six in 2008. It is therefore difficult to identify any sort of trend in these cases.

Often the vandals' degree of activity, as with the activeness of Nazi-skinhead groups, depends on subjective factors which are very difficult to understand or to predict. Thus, over several weeks at the end of May – beginning of June, graves in the Jewish sector of one of Nizhnii Novgorod's cemeteries were smashed three times. And, as a whole, the vandals of Nizhnii Novgorod region were particularly active in the first half of 2008: from January until July we recorded 12 acts of vandalism in relation to Muslims, Jews and 'ideological' targets in this region. This wave of vandalism subsided only after the capture of one of the vandals, after which only one act of vandalism was recorded in the region for the remaining six months of the year.

It is interesting to note that in winter 2008 the activities of vandals were registered only in those regions where regional or local election campaigns ran side by side with federal campaigns (in Ul'ianovsk even a candidate standing for deputy in the regional parliament, the leader of the local department of RONS, was suspected in the organization of an assault on the local Jewish community centre).

Acts of vandalism, on average, are becoming more dangerous. Earlier the vast majority of actions amounted to the drawing of insulting inscriptions or the destruction of graves, while arson and the smashing of windows were one-off events, but in 2008 we recorded no fewer than 19 cases of arson, attempted arson or explosions at places of worship (in 2007 we recorded four such incidents). Notably, of the six anti-Protestant acts recorded, five relate to arson and the sixth to the smashing of windows in Protestant premises.¹³

Ideological acts of vandalism are also acquiring a more organized and aggressive character. The number of such incidents also rocketed in the last year

¹³ There is serious doubt that we have traced the full extent of all such incidents, however, given that 100% of the incidents of anti-Protestant vandalism known to us are of such an aggressive nature. It is possible that the Protestants do not consider it necessary to report less serious incidents.

(in 2006 there were six such incidents, in 2007 eight, and in 2008 there were 26) Thus, for example, we observed an increase in such activity on the eve of the annual celebrations of Victory Day – over several days war memorials in Petersburg, Moscow region and Nizhnii Novgorod were desecrated, and in a few towns the ultra-right even attempted to carry placards and banners with neo-Nazi symbols and slogans. Explosives were used in two out of 26 cases of 'ideological' vandalism.

The more widespread and lengthy actions of vandals are coordinated over the internet. In such cases, the action is presented and built up like a computer game: the activities become more complicated from step to step: from the simple drawing of graffiti via stencils to physical threats of reprisals against particular individuals, the publication of recipes for explosives and the dissemination of video footage of imitation (one hopes) killings of people of non-Slavic appearance.

The activity of right-wing radical organizations

The activity of right-wing radical groups was fairly marked in 2008, but was clearly less aggressive than in the previous two years. From all appearances, disillusion at the results of the parliamentary campaign lingered in the first half of the year, and the second half of last year was marred by a serious crisis within the movement, the resulting traces of the split in the most notable ultra-right organization, the DPNI.

Right-wing radicals and the elections

In the elections to the State Duma on 2 December 2007, the ultra-right not only could not get their prospective candidates into the new parliament, but also lost the parliamentary lobby they already had almost entirely. A few signatories to the 'Letter of the Five Hundred' – who, by all appearances, do not maintain a relationship with Nazi-skinheads – and two LDPR representatives, Ivan Musatov (who was part of the organizing committee of the 'Russian march 2006') and Sergei Ivanov, who collaborates with the National-Socialist Society (*Natsional-sotsialisticheskoe obshchestvo*, NSO, itself in deep crisis at the end of 2007), were the only well-known xenophobes who made it back into the Duma. As a result, the ultra-right groups found themselves faced with the necessity of a search for new connections in the Russian parliament, which was initiated in an extremely limited way only towards the end of the year (see below). Furthermore, due to the lack of acting deputies, the status of events organized by the radical nationalist was drastically lowered, not to mention the fact that they lost the opportunity to organize unsanctioned meetings under the guise of 'meeting the electorate', a strategy they had devised only in 2007.

The attitude of the ultra-right sector to the presidential elections was, for the most part, extremely negative. Their negativity related to the nature of the elections as 'without choice', and to discussions of Dmitrii Medvedev's alleged Jewish origins. Concurrently with the presidential elections, however, a whole series of regional and local election campaigns were conducted, in which right radical activism has been traditionally high. In the regional municipal assemblies of Moscow, no less than 15 radical nationalists ran for election, mainly backed by the KPRF, of whom four were elected. That said, it should also be noted that the ultra-right campaigning we managed to track involved almost no xenophobic sloganeering. The People's Union (*Narodnyi soiuz*), led by Nikolai Kur'ianovich, failed to muster even one percent of votes in the elections to the legislative assembly in Yaroslavl region. The right-wing radicals also fared badly in local elections in Orel and Volgograd.

Moreover the elections evidently diverted all the available resources of radical nationalist organizations, as can be seen from Moscow DPNI's delayed response to the disorders in Belorechensk. Their involvement would appear to be specifically linked with local elections: the conflict at the disco happened on 1 January 2008, but the Moscow DPNI got involved only in February – a few weeks, that is, before the municipal elections in Belorechensk region.

Mass actions and the provocation of conflicts

Right-wing radical activity that was not related to elections began to be manifest only towards the middle of April.

On April 19, the eve of Hitler's birthday, the DPNI and its traditional partners, the Slavic Union (*Slavianskii soiuz*), the National Imperial Party of Russia (*Natsional'no-derzhavnaia partiia Rossii*, NDPR), the St Sergius Union of the Russian People (*Sviato-Sergievskii soiuz russkogo naroda*) of N. Kur'ianovich and Vladimir Osipov, the Russian National Bolshevik Front (*Russkii natsional-bol'shevistskii front*, RNBF) of Ivan Strukov and a number of different organizations made an attempt to organize a Russia-wide action 'in support of political prisoners'. This was intended to replicate the successful Russia-wide action of 27 January 2007. However, this time they managed to conduct meetings only in three Russian towns, and the numbers of supporters they gathered was fewer than in the previous year. For the second year in a row the May 1 coalition led by the DPNI organized a May 1 march from VDNKh to the Ostankino television centre, however the DPNI subsequently split and neither the DPNI nor its partners conducted any large-scale events until October, restricting themselves in the main to local picketing, pasting stickers and internet propaganda. Their attention was primarily focused on attempting to minimize the split's repercussions.

The splash of activity in October was linked to a tragedy in the Mozhaisk district of Moscow, where in September that year 15-year-old Anna Beshnova was raped and murdered. A native of Central Asia was initially suspected of committing the offence, which gave the DPNI an opportunity to return to a massive anti-immigrant campaign in Moscow which was practically supported by the mass media and anticipated the semi-official anti-immigrant propaganda of November. Persistent rumors about a whole series of similar crimes committed in the same region circulated on the internet. On October 12 a 'popular gathering' (which does not require official permission, unlike a meeting or a rally) was conducted, which ended with a march by the ultra-right to the headquarters of the district council. The action really became a peculiar prelude to the 'Russian march' because of its broad media resonance. And, without a doubt, a whole series of cruel hate crimes are directly connected to precisely this campaign. Thus, on November 4 two Uzbek yard-sweepers were killed not far from Mozhaisk district council headquarters, and at the beginning of December the severed head of a person killed by neo-Nazis in Moscow region was dumped near the same council building.

Provocation as a propaganda method

It became evident that ultra-right groups have begun to use imitation aggression from Caucasian and Muslim groups as a means of provoking xenophobic moods and actions in 2008. These provocations are clearly calculated on the high level of xenophobia in society, on the discriminatory practice rooted in government bodies, above all in law enforcement bodies, and on the unprofessional nature of the mass media.

We can clearly identify a minimum of three such provocations in the last year.

In September 2008, the Avenue of Glory in Achinsk (Krasnoiarsk region), dedicated to veterans of World War II, was desecrated. Insulting graffiti, including anti-Russian inscriptions, were drawn over portraits of veterans and war machinery on display there. A week later, similar inscriptions were daubed on several of the town's public buildings. However, the nature of the graffiti left no doubt that this was a provocation by Russian nationalists (evidently, very young ones). Since the incident had wide public resonance, we note the active position of the town authorities, who moved very swiftly to announce that this was not Russophobia but an attempt to incite xenophobic moods.

Another example was less obvious. An individual who sent around 400 anti-Russian texts to mobile telephones was convicted of inciting hatred in Rostov region in July. Since no details were released to the media, the incident was interpreted as a clear episode of Russophobia. However, when the details of the

criminal proceedings became known towards the end of the year, it became clear that this was in fact a case of skilful provocation of anti-Caucasus feeling: the author of these messages calculated that these texts would provoke an aggressive response towards people from the Caucasus, who could have been suspected of sending the texts.¹⁴ It is entirely possible to imagine what such aggression might have been, in a region bordering with the North Caucasus where two years ago, by some miracle, pogroms against people from the Caucasus were narrowly avoided.

A ‘formula’ for provoking anti-Caucasian and anti-Muslim feeling was already circulating on the radical right-wing segment of the Russian-speaking internet by January 2009. These instructions suggested that hoax bombs be planted in the name of Caucasian and Muslim groups, and literally within a few days we learned that such an action had been implemented by the ultra-right at least once in 2008 – in Nevinnomyssk (Stavropol region), where a hoax bomb was left in the building of the local department of the FSB.

Coalitions, splits and conflicts

The sole serious attempt to create a coalition of Russian nationalist organizations of varying degrees of radicalism was the creation of the Russian National Movement (*Russkoe natsional'noe dvizhenie* RND), a coalition of the DPNI (A. Belov), the Great Russia party, NAROD (*Natsional'noe Russkoe Osvoboditel'noe Dvizhenie*, the National Russian Liberation Movement – the acronym of which means ‘the People’) and the Russian Social Movement (*Russkoe obshchestvennoe dvizhenie*, ROD). The unifying conference was conducted in Moscow on June 8 and a series of collective documents were passed.¹⁵ On the one hand the conference simply formalized a *de facto* coalition which had already been in existence for a few months. On the other, in the opinion of many observers, from the start the RND didn't pretend to be any kind of new, single movement, and nor did it become so. It simply proclaimed the readiness of concrete organizations for collaborative political acts on a fairly narrow circle of issues (the most important of which was identified as the joint struggle with ‘*Russophobia in all its forms*’, specifically ‘*to stand against unfair use of article 282 of the C[riminal] C[ode] of the R[ussian] F[ederation] against activists of the Russian National Movement.*’ By the end of 2008, there were few who remembered the RND.

Despite the fact that the creation of the RND wasn't anything extraordinary, it specifically became one of the events which aggravated an already

¹⁴ Baranov, Konstantin, *Monitoring proiavlenii ksenofobii, religioznoi neterpimosti, sotsial'noi nenavisti i diskriminatsii v Rostovskoi oblasti (2008-2009 gg.)* (Rostov, 2009).

¹⁵ *Pakt 8 iunija* and *Memorandum* (political statements by the organisers of the conference).

existing serious crisis in the DPNI, and indeed in the right-wing radical sector as a whole, effectively becoming only a link in the chain of a whole procession of splits and conflicts.

The split in the DPNI, in its turn, triggered a serious change in a whole series of unions. The split was marked in May 2008, when the leaders of the Potkin brothers' organization (Alexander Belov and Vladimir Basmanov) took steps to transform the DPNI from a network structure into a party-type organization with a code and strict hierarchy. This initiative was not supported by a section of the activists, which came to be called DPNI-Mossovet, guided by the leader of the Moscow organization Aleksei Mikhailov. A third centre of the split soon emerged, the DPNI-Russian Civil Society (DPNI-*Russkoe grazhdanskoe obshchestvo* DPNI-RGO), headed by the ultra radical Dmitrii Zubov, leader of the Briansk DPNI. This group, arguing for the preservation of the network structure, declared their intention to radicalize the movement to the maximum. Furthermore, the union of the DPNI with the NAROD movement within the framework of the RND was acceptable to neither the DPNI-Mossovet, nor to the DPNI-RGO: NAROD activists, coming from the National-Bolshevik party (NBP), the Communist party (KPRF) and Yabloko ('Apple'), are considered too liberal by the majority of nationalists.

Declarations about desires to resolve the conflict within the DPNI remained simply declarations, and both ‘unifying’ congresses simply strengthened the schism. Ideological and organizational differences were compounded by personal conflicts. The first congress – prepared by A. Belov and V. Basmanov – was held on June 12, and besides the formal acceptance of regulations and the election of a new leadership for the movement, it was marked by a walk-out from the hall by split supporters.¹⁶ The second congress, led by supporters of A. Mikhailov on September 13, was ignored by both Belov's and Zubov's supporters. Its sole result, apart from the final strengthening of the schism, was the renaming of DPNI-Mossovet ‘Russian DPNI (*Russkoe DPNI*)’.

The initiator of the schism, Aleksei Mikhailov, left the Russian DPNI shortly after the September congress, announcing the creation of his own project ‘Russian Civil Society’ (*Russkoe grazhdanskoe obshchestvo* – in no way connected with the RGO of D. Zubov).

The DPNI schism forced the movement's traditional allies to develop their own relations with the centers of the split. This task was made more complicated by the fact that autumn is the period of preparation for the ‘Russian march’, and a fierce struggle for the brand ensued (see below).

¹⁶ But Belov and Basmanov remain the leaders of the DPNI, as before.

By November it was obvious that the Belov-Basmanov group – whose allies remained the SS, the National-Patriotic Front ‘Memory’ (*Natsional’no-patrioticheskii front ‘Pamiat’*), ROD, Russian Order (*Russkii poriadok*), NAROD and RNBF – had won the struggle for the ‘DPNI’ brand.

The Russian DPNI were supported by the NDPR and the Party for Defense of the Russian Constitution ‘Rus’ (*Partiia zashchity rossiiskoi konstitutsii ‘Rus’*, PZPK Rus). Furthermore, they were also joined by several unidentified ultra-right groups. As a result, on November 1, 2008, within the framework of preparations for one of the ‘Russian marches’, the creation of Russovet – a coalition of ‘Russian’¹⁷ organizations – was declared, as a new form of self-organized society (in fact an ethnic variant of pre-revolutionary Soviets). The march organized by Russovet basically fell apart, and this engendered disillusion in the project in the most prominent member of the coalition, the leader of the NDPR Alexander Sevast’ianov, who announced that the NDPR were leaving Russovet. Later the position was corrected: it was announced that Sevast’ianov, disillusioned with political activity, was personally leaving Russovet and the NDPR, but the NDPR would remain a member of the coalition.

RONs could not find any way to resolve their relations with the splintered DPNI. Its symbols were not at any of the Moscow ‘Russian marches’, although RONS activists allegedly took part in three Moscow marches. And Zubov’s small group failed to find supporters, and already by November had practically ceased to be active.

Against a background of such a major schism, other changes in the ultra-right sector attracted little attention, although they also seriously influenced both the configuration of small groups, and their public activity. Thus, in spring 2008 Iurii Beliaev’s Party of Freedom (*Partiia svobody*) survived the latest in a series of splits. The NSO practically ceased to exist in the public sphere after its leader, Dmitrii Rumiantsev, announced in April 2008 that he was leaving the organization, a few days before he was sentenced. Before long he was heading a certain League 301 (*Liga 301*) which, by all accounts, had also ceased to exist by the end of the year. And before the New Year festivities themselves, a Lilliputian but extremely aggressive group, the Northern Brotherhood (*Severnoe bratstvo*), underwent a schism and parted from its ideologist Petr Khomiakov.

The end of the year was also marked by the disappearance of Sergei Baburin’s People’s Union (*Narodnyi soiuz*, NS) – the only officially registered political party of Russian nationalists (not counting the almost apolitical LDPR) – from the Russian political scene. The NS, which had successfully reregistered at the beginning of 2007, announced its renunciation of politi-

¹⁷ By ‘Russian’ here is understood organisations with an ethnically Russian leadership.

cal party status at the abruptly convened extraordinary tenth party congress on December 13. While maintaining all the same leaders, it was decided to continue the activity of the organization within the framework of the Russian All-People’s Union (*Rossiiskii obshchenarodnyi soiuz*, ROS, from which the party had in fact grown) which had evidently maintained its registration. The reasons officially given for this transformation were disillusion about participating in elections under the existing regime and the intention to create a wider coalition of forces for ‘*the return of society to the conciliar resolution of any questions*’.¹⁸ This decision was not supported by the whole series of regional organizations, in the name of which an announcement appeared on the internet about the illegality of the congress’ decision. The leadership of the NS, however, called this announcement a provocation, saying that the majority of the regional sections who had allegedly signed the document had long ago ceased to exist.

The ‘Russian march’ against the background of the schism

Against the background of the schism, the ‘Russian march’ in Moscow had a somewhat humorous character. Several ultra-right coalitions simultaneously and immediately claimed the brand. Prudently, several groups which had traditionally maintained relationships with the main participants in the 2008 conflict did not withdraw their support from a single event, announcing afterwards that their activists participated simultaneously in most of the actions of those groups ‘allied’ to them (as, for example, RONS did).

As a result, three events were planned for November 4 in Moscow under the name the ‘Russian march’: the officially permitted march along the Taras Shevchenko embankment, organized by Sergei Baburin’s People’s Union; the ‘Russian march to the Kremlin’ organized by Belov and Basmanov’s DPNI and their allies; and the Russian DPNI’s ‘Russian march on the metro’ – neither of which were granted permission. Besides these, a religious procession of Orthodox monarchist organizations was planned along the Moscow boulevard ring road under the aegis of Oleg Kassin’s People’s Council (*Narodnyi sobor*).

The action planned on the metro openly fell apart as a result of bad organization: even the place it would be conducted had not been agreed, as a result of which even the leaders of the Russian DPNI, Iurii Gorskii and Aleksei Kanurin, went to different stations. The whole thing boiled down to the unfolding of a few posters, fairly incomprehensible to metro passengers, and slogans yelled by Gorskii.

¹⁸ *Sostoial'sia X (vneocherednoi) s'ezd partii 'Narodnyi Soiuz'*, Narodnoi Soiuz official website, 16 December 2008 (<http://www.partia-nv.ru/news/2008/n161208.html>).

The march along the Shevchenko embankment gathered no more than 800 people from no less than 12 organizations.¹⁹ The main body consisted of Nazi-skinheads, doubtless attracted by the participation of Russian Image and the personal connections of the ex-leader of DPNI-Mossovet, A. Mikhailov. Open calls to violence were heard at the meeting, however because of the difference in age and outlook between the main mass of participants and the orators (the overwhelming majority of whom were veterans of the national-patriotic movement from the Yeltsin – and even Soviet – era), the meeting didn't generate a great deal of enthusiasm.

The 'march to the Kremlin' gathered no less than 500 people. At least the DPNI, ROD, NAROD, NPF 'Memory', RNBF participated, and – judging by appearances – an array of less than publically prominent Nazi-skinhead groups. As a result, the march turned into a march of neo-Nazis along the Old Arbat, which ended in an unduly harsh crackdown and the detaining of the majority of participants by OMON. In so far as the event had a provocative character from the start, a whole gamut of ultra-right activists expressed doubt about the wisdom of participating. But the reasoning of the organizers, who were able to compare the emotional reaction to the (forbidden) march of 2006 and the (permitted) march of 2007, was understandable. The prohibition and demonstrative insubordination to the authorities (up to the rejection of their original declarations)²⁰ should have not only justified considerably fewer participants than in the previous march; they should have imparted new emotional momentum to the action, after the clear disappointment of the 2007 march. However, judging by the subsequent reaction on the right-wing radical internet, the leaders didn't succeed in overcoming apathy and disillusion in the very idea of the march.

Some participants in both the march on the embankment and the march along the Arbat managed to unite with participants in the religious procession

¹⁹ According to our observations, activist with symbols from the following organisations were present on the Shevchenko embankment: the People's Union, the Nationwide Movement 'Russian Union' (*Obshchenatsional'noe dvizhenie 'Russkii soiuz'* – a group formed back in the middle of the 90s, which had not showed signs of life for a long time), Russian Image, A. Mikhailov's Russian Civil Society, Union of Orthodox Banner-bearers, N. Kur'ianovich's Union of Russian People, the Union of Orthodox Citizens (represented by Valentin Lebedev), the Union of Officers, the Union of Christian Revival, the National Unity Front 'Imperial Union' (*Front natsional'nogo edinstva 'Imperskii Soiuz'*), Hardline Straight Edge (also called Black Block, *chernyi blok*), the Black Hundred (*Chernaia sotnia*).

²⁰ On October 9 and 20, 2008, the DPNI declared that it delivered a request to hold the march along the Shevchenko embankment, but on November 1 the movement disseminated the announcement that the DPNI had never agreed to march along this route. See: 'Podana zaiavka na provedenie Russkogo marsha v Moskve' on the original site of the DPNI, 20 October 2008; 'Obrashchenie Orgkomiteta Russkogo Marsha-2008', *ibid*, 1 November 2008.

along the Moscow boulevards, which as a result gathered around 300-350 people. However this march also didn't happen: it was stopped by OMON in the middle of Tverskoi boulevard,²¹ and after a stand-off of more than an hour (OMON cordoned off the road with a chain, the believers prayed on their knees and sang psalms), most people dispersed. Of the few dozen people who continued the march, some were detained around the Kremlin embankment and some dispersed by the police.

All in all, the 'Russian march' and accompanying actions once again illustrated the crisis in the ultra-right movement, but despite the subterfuges of the organizers, by all appearances they could not overcome the disenchantment with the event that set in during 2007.

Impressions of a crisis were strengthened by the effective collapse of the march in Petersburg, where firstly a coalition of 75 (!) organizations could not conduct a single march, and secondly two alternative marches were extremely poorly attended and failed to gather even 200 people all told. To this may be added the conflict in Perm, where (evidently as a result of bureaucratic incompetence) of all the applications for conducting the 'Russian march', permission was granted to Evdokim Kniazev (D. Zubov's DPNI), the most radical applicant with almost no influence. As a result, the march in Perm almost collapsed.

On the other hand, the march did indeed go ahead in 16 towns across the country, and preserved the same geographic spread as the year before.

The expansion of nationalism into public life

Xenophobia in the name of the state

In contrast to previous years, there was no openly discriminatory campaign such as the anti-Georgian one (2006) and the anti-Estonian campaign (2007). Media coverage of the war in South Ossetia in August and September made clear that the conflict was political rather than ethnic. This does not mean that there were no manifestations of ethnic hatred against Georgians during this period, however. As in 2006, mainstream media coverage of attacks on ethnic Georgians and other anti-Georgian incidents was absent, although such incidents certainly occurred.²² Moreover, SOVA's hate speech research has more than

²¹ A year earlier, the same organizers did not submit a request to the town hall for a comparable religious procession, and that procession went ahead without any problems. This time, although once again there was not a single political slogan, but only icons and religious banners, the organizers nevertheless recalled the necessity of submitting a request and the procession was repressed.

²² If the mass media wrote about any manifestations of everyday xenophobia towards Georgians which didn't result in human injury (for example, the false information about the

once highlighted the fact that the level of xenophobia in today's Russia is such that even expressly political rhetoric is often interpreted as relating to ethnicity. Given that the repercussions of the anti-Georgian campaign in 2006 have not yet been surmounted, this is especially true of the coverage of the conflict in South Ossetia.

From October, part of the Russian mass media gave up on pure political rhetoric and returned again to the topics of 'Georgian criminality', 'Georgian terrorism' and 'Russian money' earned by Russian citizens of Georgian origin and sent to relatives in Georgia. It is telling that one of the most aggressive articles was published in the governmental *Russian Newspaper (Rossiiskaia gazeta)*.²³

However, soon the anti-Georgian rhetoric of the mass media was completely swallowed up in anti-migrant rhetoric. Its message boiled down to the proposition that migrants who have lost work as a result of the economic crisis, instead of leaving or searching for new work, swell the criminal ranks almost en bloc. This campaign, which began in the middle of October 2008 and has not yet come to an end, is being conducted not only by the mass media.²⁴ It was supported by government bureaucrats at very different levels. Probably the most notable was the announcement by the State Duma deputy Andrei Isaev (United Russia), the sense of which was that in inviting migrant workers we must be prepared for the fact that when they are chucked out on the street either we ourselves, or our relatives, will receive a brick to the head.²⁵

The mood of panic was aggravated by the death of Anna Beshnova and related events, and also by traditional announcements by law enforcement agencies that '*for the given period of time migrants committed more crimes than were committed against them*'. The announcements linked to the note of protest by the government of Tajikistan after the bestial murder and beheading of a Tajik workers in December 2008 were especially inappropriate. A few changes in the rhetoric of police representatives took shape only at the beginning of 2009, however even a complete refusal by law enforcement officers to discuss the theme of 'ethnic' crime (which we have thus far not observed) is unlikely to swiftly neutralize the negative consequences of the autumn and winter anti-migrant hysteria which the police themselves supported.

mining of a Georgian restaurant), information about attacks on ethnic Georgians or those who are taken for Georgians was exclusively on the internet.

²³ Vasil'kov, Anton 'Lezginka s vykhodom na rubl'', *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 1 October 2008 (<http://rg.ru/2008/10/01/dengi.html>).

²⁴ Mikhail Deliagin made one of the first such declarations, after which his opinion began to be cited as the only view of economists.

²⁵ 'V tsentre sobytii', TVTs, 19 October 2008.

Against the backdrop of the anti-migrant campaign the ultra-right at last managed to establish a firm connection with one of the United Russia deputies in the State Duma, Maksim Mishchenko, the leader of Young Russia (*Rossia molodaia*, sometimes shortened to *Rumol*). Namely he is perceived by a whole array of ultra-right groups allied to Russian Image (*Russkii obraz*) as the main lobbyist of their interests, in place of the lost deputy mandate of N. Kur'ianovich. At least, it is specifically through Mishchenko that they are attempting to advance their legislative proposals, which are of an openly discriminatory nature (even down to the introduction of '*a special crime subject: the migrant*'). But on December 27, 2008, an open letter to the Moscow authorities and the Russian secret services began to circulate on the internet, signed by ultra-right activists A. Mikhailov (ex-DPNI), Ilya Goriachev (Russian Image) and... the very same M. Mishchenko. The letter contained a demand '*to restrict the access of immigrants to Red Square and the surrounding territory on New Year's Eve night*'.

As well as actions of Federation-wide scope, an initiative by the Krasnodar region Education Department, which recommended a census of children 'from the Caucasus' (censuses must be carried out by phenotype and/or surname of those studying) as an 'anti-extremism' measure, provoked substantial public debate. Similar initiatives are not new in Russian discriminatory practice, however earlier they were the initiative of the secret service. Afterwards however, as the scandal erupted, the Krasnodar authorities denied the existence of any such instructions.

The activities of pro-government youth organizations

The xenophobic activity of pro-government youth organizations became more marked.

Few people paid attention to the 'Easter Serbian march', which took place on the Shevchenko embankment on April 27, 2008,²⁶ probably because the official march organizer was the Eurasian Youth Union (*Evrasiiskii soiuz molodezhi*, ESM), an ultra-right organization loyal to Putin, whose express aim is to '*fight against the Orange revolution*'. Meanwhile this march was the first, although not the only, mass event in 2008 in which the ESM, Nazi-skinheads and activists from the pro-government Young Russia (heading up the march with their leader, the above-mentioned Maksim Mishchenko) took part together.

The 'Locals' movement (*Mestnye*) held another racist campaign in the summer, in effect repeating the summer 2007 action under slight different slogans. Formally the activists were protesting against 'illegal' private taxis, however the entire advertising campaign which accompanied the action underlined the fact

²⁶ We note that the meeting ended with several racist attacks.

that Locals are calling for the services of non-Slavic drivers to be rejected. Like the year before, there was no reaction from the law enforcement agencies to the activities of these young activists, who were protected by the patronage of the governor of Moscow region Boris Gromov.

The situation escalated after the anti-migrant campaign was joined by the most official of the pro-Kremlin youth movements, the Young Guard of United Russia (*Molodaia gvardiia 'Edinoi Rossii'*, MGER). At the end of October the MGER began a Russia-wide campaign 'Our money to our people', which formally amounted to the requirement that vacancies be offered to Russian citizens in preference to economic migrants from abroad. In practice, the campaign's main slogan was '*Moscow – home!*'

If the MGER had initially attempted to stick to strictly social protectionist rhetoric, then already within a few days they had signed an agreement about joint anti-immigrant actions with the Locals (the latter simultaneously expressed their readiness to collaborate with those splinters of the DPNI which are no longer controlled by A. Belov). In December an article about the action, in which '*gastarbeiters*' were contrasted with 'Russians', appeared on the MGER website.²⁷

As can be seen from the above, the pro-Kremlin movements are *de facto* engaging in straightforward competition with ultra-right groups in the public sphere, legitimizing ethnically-colored anti-migrant moods and discriminatory practice.

Counteracting radical nationalism

The international level

In July–August 2008 Russia presented the periodic report to the United Nations committee on its fulfillment of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. An alternative NGO report, supported by 33 Russian organizations, was simultaneously put before the committee. The committee reacted very critically to the document presented by Russia, which was reflected in the recommendations published on August 20. In these the committee suggested, amongst other things, that an independent investigation

²⁷ Tomilin, Nikita 'Rossii ne nuzhny raby!' Available on the official site of the MGER. February 18, 2008. The author of the article is not only an MGER activist but a well-known ultra-right blogger (tomilin88), who has openly declared his nationalist views (see for example: Tomilin, N. 'Park putinskogo period', NaZlobu, 3 October 2007 (<http://www.nazlobu.ru/publications/article2239.htm>)).

of the anti-Georgian campaign of 2006 be conducted, that bureaucrats and other individuals directly participating in discrimination be systematically punished, that the recording of racist crimes be improved, etc.

The first measure we know of on the international level acknowledged the racism of Russian football fans: in June 2008 the UEFA disciplinary committee fined the Zenit football club 60,000 Swiss francs for the racist behavior of their fans during a UEFA Cup match with the French side Olympique Marseille on March 12, 2008.²⁸

Legislation and structural changes in government bodies

In contrast to the pre-election year 2007, anti-extremist legislative activity was less significant, and the majority of draft legislation was recalled or dismissed.²⁹

It is worth noting only one law, in fact. It was accepted in spring 2008 and on May 6 was brought into force. The law has a technical character, linked with the functions of the Federal Registration Service (*Rosregistratsiia*, FRS). Changes were introduced into several existing laws, which allowed a number of functions to be performed not by the '*agency of justice*' (the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, *Miniust*), as was previously established in law, but by '*the federal agency of government registration*' (the FRS). Only as a result of the implementation of this law did the FRS receive, in part, the functions envisaged by the law 'On combating extremist activity', that is the responsibility for maintaining a list of extremist organizations, and the responsibility for monitoring organizations for any activity which might be deemed extremist, including the right of the FRS to issue warnings and to serve lawsuits about their liquidation or banning. In this manner, a technical error in existence since 2004 – about which we have written several times – was finally eliminated. To remind the reader, the conflict consisted of the fact that under the reorganization of the system of federal agencies of executive government, the Ministry of Justice lost the function of maintaining the federal lists of extremist materials and organizations. The FRS, however, did not acquire this function. The function of maintaining a register of extremist material was given to the FRS by order of the president in May 2006, but once again the register of extremist organizations was forgotten about. The law implemented in May filled this lacuna. What is curious, however, is that in fact this situation existed for only one week. Already on May

²⁸ Andrushkevich, Georgii "'Zenit' nakazali slishkom miagko', *Novye novosti*, 20 November 2008 (http://www.infox.ru/sport/football/2008/11/20/zenith_shtraf.shtml)).

²⁹ This is discussed in more detail in the related SOVA Center annual report.

12, Dmitrii Medvedev signed an order which supported the final changes in the structure of the federal agencies of executive government. By this, amongst other things, the function connected with the registration of political, public and other non-commercial organizations (and by the current logic of the law – also the function of maintaining the register of extremist organizations and materials) was returned to the Ministry of Justice.

It should be observed that, contrary to expectations, the hiatus in activities connected to maintenance of the lists (when the FRS had ceased to do so, but the Ministry of Justice had not yet started), was relatively short – from the middle of May to the beginning of July).

On the other hand there is no doubting the importance of the structural changes which were implemented in the Ministry of the Interior system in autumn 2008.

The Presidential Order ‘On several matters of the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation’ was signed and implemented on September 2. Amongst other things, a number of functions linked with crimes of an extremist tendency were specified. The structures relating to the fight against organized crime were disbanded throughout the Ministry of the Interior, and in their place subdivisions were created for the counteraction of extremism (a department for the counteraction of extremism in the Ministry and centers of the same name in the regions) and for the safeguarding of persons subject to government protection.³⁰

If one sets aside the imprecise understanding of ‘extremism’ in Russian legislation, this reorganization may be evaluated as an exclusively positive functional transformation. It not only strengthens established practice (to remind the reader, the departments for combating organized crime often investigated neo-Nazi crimes previously), but develops it by separating ‘extremist’ crimes off as a particular type of crime which requires a specialized approach and specialized skills for its investigation. One may expect the mediocre quality of investigations of crimes motivated by hatred to improve. After only a few months since the reorganization began, it is, however, too early to judge.

The function to protect participants in legal proceedings is not considered as an ‘anti-extremist’ activity in the context of the Order. However, firstly the very fact of separating off such a specialized type of activity is important. Secondly, this function is very important for racist, neo-Nazi crimes, as given the current scale of right-wing radical and neo-Nazi activity, the security of participants in legal processes against the ultra-right is under threat (suffice to recall the murder

³⁰ According to current Russian legislation, this is participants in the legal process: victims, witnesses, expert witnesses, judges, prosecutors, investigators etc.

of Nikolai Girenko and the attacks on expert witnesses Dmitrii Dubrovskii and Valentina Uzunova in Petersburg).

Criminal proceedings

Prosecutions for violence

In 2008 there no fewer than 33 successful prosecutions for crimes related to racist violence, in which hate was recognized as an aggravating circumstance (in 2007 there were 23). 114 persons were convicted in proceedings across 19 regions of the country.³¹

The following punishments were allocated:

28 people received probationary sentences;

Two of those convicted were sentenced to correctional labor;

13 people received a custodial sentence of up to two years;

22 people – up to five years;

33 people – up to ten years;³²

Six people – up to 15 years;

Six people – up to 20 years;

Four people received life sentences.

A further three were relieved of criminal responsibility, because at the time the crime was committed they were younger than 14.

33 successful prosecutions for racist violence represents the highest number since the legislation taking the hate motive into account was implemented (the same number were passed in 2006). Concurrent to an evident increase in the prosecution of racists, we are seeing a clear improvement in the way in which charges are brought.

Firstly, charges brought against perpetrators of violent crimes have stopped focusing on the notorious article 282, which is intended rather for the prosecution of propagandists. Thus, only in seven of the 33 trials (that is 22%) was article 282 used to denote the racist motive of the attack, and the remaining cases used other articles of the Criminal Code. In former years the number of successful prosecutions for violent crime where article 282 was used wavered between 30% and 50%. The specific penalty enhancement of hatred was used in 2008 in sentences connected with murder (article 105); the inflicting of griev-

³¹ We note that the motive of hatred was not present in all the verdicts handed down to these 114 individuals.

³² In the case of the ‘Kalinichenko group’ we know that seven people were given custodial sentences of ‘from three to nine years’, however the exact length of punishment is unknown.

ous (article 111), medium (article 112) and minor bodily harm (article 115); battery (article 116); torture (article 117); hooliganism (article 213) and threats to murder (article 119).

Several of the above-cited articles of the Criminal Code are the result of changes in the code, brought into force only in the summer of 2007. If earlier we observed that new norms – especially linked with proof of racist motives – begin to work extremely slowly, because of the investigators' inertness and a lack of skill in proving this motive, then the new norms began to work very quickly. The first verdicts were already being passed under an array of renewed articles in 2007, and in 2008, it seems, almost the whole spectrum of articles of the Criminal Code began to be used, incorporating the specific penalty enhancement of hatred. Thus, for example, the new version of article 119 (threats to murder), as far as we know, was first used in law enforcement practice in 2008. It is also worth noting that in cases of the application of article 119 (and in 2008 there were two such cases) the motive of hatred was used to denote a manifestation of 'everyday' xenophobia, which is very rarely reflected in the legal treatment of the crime. In Samara region a woman was convicted of threatening her fellow villager, an ethnic Bashkir, and in Arkhangelsk region a young man threatened a Dagestani driver with an axe.

Secondly, the presence of a mercenary motive is no longer an insurmountable obstacle to a crime being qualified as racist. There were accusations of robbery (article 161) and robbery with violence (article 162) amongst the charges in nine of the 33 cases. It is too early, however, to speak about a stable positive tendency: the 2008 data tallies with the data from 2006, but in 2007 there was a significant fall – mercenary motives were included in only three sentences out of 23.

Thirdly, an analysis of the sentences further supports the thesis that perceptions of the hypothetical racism of the jurors who acquit skinheads are grossly exaggerated and are being used for propaganda to ensure the removal of this category of cases (together with a whole array of other crimes) from the jurisdiction of courts where there is a right to trial by jury. Thus, out of seven jury trials relating to racist crime examined in 2008, in only one case was a 'not guilty' verdict reached – in the case of the murder of an Armenian youth in the summer of 2007. The main reason, as usual, was an inadequate investigation: only one of the two attackers was apprehended, and judging by the description of the process in the mass media, the witness testimony gave grounds for doubt that the attacker apprehended was indeed the one who actually delivered the fatal blow.

Positive changes are especially noticeable in the prosecution of those involved in racist violence, in Moscow, for example. Here we noticed an im-

provement in the situation even in 2007. In 2008 we can confirm that this is a stable tendency.

Quantitative indicators for prosecutions of racist violence have almost doubled (although the figures remain extremely negligible): in 2008 there were seven prosecutions, compared to four in 2007. The qualitative improvement, however, is even more important. If in 2007 not only significant cases were investigated, now the next step has been taken. Earlier, cases relating to racist attacks amounted to one or two criminal incidents for which, as a rule, one or two defendants were tried, and the rest remained 'unidentified persons'. In 2008, cases linked with large neo-Nazi groups which had committed serious crimes resulted in guilty verdicts: the Kalinichenko and Ryno-Skachevskii gangs and the 'Cherkizovo bombers'.

The verdict on Nikolai Korolev's group was passed on May 15. Eight group members were charged with a whole series of explosions in Moscow, the most tragic of which was the explosion in Cherkizovo market, in which 14 people died and 60 were wounded. All group participants were found guilty by the jury and received prison sentences from two years to life.

Sentences were passed next on the 'Kalinichenko group' (in September) and the 'Ryno-Skachevskii group' (in December), accused of 21 murders and more than 30 assaults in total. And although public opinion remained dissatisfied with the verdict in both cases,³³ the exposure of these crimes and the liquidation of such groups is in itself significant. Since then, as far as we know, only in Petersburg has something similar happened, in connection with the prosecutions of 'Shultz-88' and 'Mad Crowd'. However, the number of charges brought against these groups was considerably lower.

Among the negative tendencies related to the prosecution of racist violence, it is worth noting the main one, which has been an issue for many years – as before, the proportion of probationary sentences imposed for violent crimes remains significant (no less than a quarter of the total number of those convicted). Doubtless, not every racist crime should result in the loss of freedom, and major anti-racist processes would be impossible without the plea bargains which necessarily lighten the sentence, however such a high percentage of probationary sentences cannot but make one uneasy.

Yet another persistent problem is linked rather with access to information. As before (although far more rarely than in recent years) a proportion of

³³ In both groups the majority of individuals were underage, and the maximum sentence for juveniles is ten years deprivation of freedom. For two murders and more than ten attempted murders, the members of the Kalinichenko group therefore received from three to ten years, and members of the Ryno-Skachevskii group from six to 20 years, moreover the leaders, Artur Ryno and Pavel Skachevskii – as juveniles – received custodial sentences of ten years each.

the successful proceedings against racists escapes the attention of the media and remains practically unknown. And neither the prosecutor's office nor the court demonstrates any interest in disseminating information about further successful anti-racist experience. Thus, for example, practically nothing is known about a sentence passed in October 2006 in Moscow region for hate-motivated murder, apart from the fact that it was passed. And there were only two successful criminal proceedings of this type in the entire Moscow region, for the whole of 2008.

Also, of course, in observing such clear progress in the criminal prosecution of racist violence, we must remember that the number of sentences nevertheless, in our estimation, falls short of the number of crimes 20-fold or more.³⁴ And this is in many respects explains the fact that similar trials, be they conducted even at the highest level of quality, are not a factor in suppressing racist violence precisely by virtue of their sparse numbers.

Law enforcement practice as regards hate-motivated vandalism has barely developed, however. As far as we know, there were only two convictions for cemetery vandalism motivated by hatred in 2008 – in Izhevsk and in Nizhnii Novgorod (both of those convicted in these cases were given probationary sentences without any sort of supplementary sanctions). We do not observe any particular dynamic in the application of these articles of the Criminal Code in comparison with earlier years: in 2007 there were also two convictions, in 2006 – none, and in 2005 – one.

Prosecutions for propaganda

Xenophobic propaganda is being prosecuted even more actively than violence. In 2008 there were no less than 49 successful prosecutions across 30 regions of Russia: 42 – for inciting hatred (article 282) and seven – for calls to extremist activity (article 280), excluding sentences which we consider unlawful. As far as we know, this is the highest number of successful prosecutions of racists ever in Russia (the previous record was 28 in 2007).

The punishments awarded for racist propaganda are as follows. Of 66 defendants convicted in these 49 trials:

³⁴ Statistical evaluations have, of course, only a tentative character, but we will attempt such an evaluation. In 2007 the SOVA Center knew of around 700 victims of racist and neo-Nazi attacks in total and in 2006 of around 600, and there were 33 successful prosecutions in 2008. Given the length of the investigation, we should in fact compare with the year before or even earlier years. Thus we end up with a proportion of convictions to victims at around 1 to 20. Of course, many were convicted for more than one attack, but it should be remembered that while we know of almost all the verdicts, we know far from all of the crimes.

- 25 received either a probationary sentence without supplementary sanctions or were released without punishment because the statute of limitations had expired;
- Two were forbidden to pursue journalistic activities;
- Ten people were sentenced to correctional labor;
- Seven people were fined;
- Nine people received a custodial sentence of up to one year;
- Eight people received a custodial sentence of up to three years;
- Five people received a custodial sentence of from three and half to seven years.

We note that of the 15 successful prosecutions in which defendants (22 in total) received custodial sentences, we consider the harshness of the punishment to be unwarranted in only in six cases.³⁵ The sentencing was gratuitously harsh in five out of nine successful prosecutions in 2007, so the proportion of such punishments has got smaller.

On the whole, however, in contrast to violent crime, we are unable to so categorically declare that along with the growth in the quantity of sentences there has been a corresponding rise in quality.

As before, the proportion of probationary sentences or release from punishment remains high – in 20 cases out of the 49 (that is, 41%) – and this is the largest number for the last three years (in 2007 the proportion of such sentences was 29%, and in 2006 it was 35%).

As before, it is extremely rare for a prohibition on activities to be imposed as a punishment, and this is a far more effective punishment for propagandists in our view. A prohibition on practicing a profession was used only in three cases out of the 49: in two as the main punishment, and in another as supplementary to a custodial sentence.

It is absolutely clear that in prosecuting racist propaganda the focus of attention of the law-enforcement bodies is increasingly deflected onto insignificant crimes (the drawing of swastikas on buildings, the distribution of leaflets etc.). In contrast to 2007, when increased pressure on the leaders of nationalist organizations – albeit regional – was observed, the ideologists of the ultra-right movement (with a few notable exceptions) are not really attracting the attention of the law-enforcement agencies. We know of four guilty verdicts against leaders of regional national-patriotic organizations (in contrast to 11 in 2007): two

³⁵ Nine custodial sentences we consider appropriate, as in these cases either the accused had prior convictions for racist crimes, or the propaganda entailed real threats of violence or provocation of violence, or article 282 was imposed as only one component of wider charges.

in Blagoveshchensk (Amur Union of Russian People, *Soiuz russkogo naroda*, and DPNI), one in Akhtubinsk ('For the Empire of God', '*K Bogoderzhaviiu*') and one – the most significant – in Ekaterinburg (People's National Party, *Narodnaia natsional'naia partiia*).

Guilty verdicts were reached in four trials against figures of Russia-wide repute, but two of them – the leader of the NSO Dmitrii Rumiantsev and the well-known aggressive antisemite Boris Mironov – managed to escape punishment: the first was awarded a probationary sentence, and the second was released without punishment because the statute of limitations had expired (the case against Mironov was clearly drawn out by artifice, and the statute of limitations was very doubtful, especially given that Mironov hid from investigators for a long period).

Iurii Beliaev, already in possession of a probationary sentence for inciting hatred, was given only a six month custodial sentence. In fact there was only one serious sentence handed down to a leader of a neo-Nazi organization: in February one of the most well-known Russian Nazi-skinheads Maksim (Tesak) Martsinkevich was given a custodial sentence of three years for a neo-Nazi outburst at the Bilingua club in 2007. By this sentence the court demonstrated that one may approach a Russian neo-Nazi icon not only from the point of view of the severity of the crime committed (it is clear that Martsinkevich's cries could have been punished more lightly). The court, it seems, calculated that it was Martsinkevich in particular, on his website Format-18, who had introduced the fashion of creating video clips of racist attacks (genuine or mocked-up) and disseminating them on the internet. The prosecution of this activity had, however, not been initiated.³⁶ The arrest and judgment of Tesak, meanwhile, triggered serious consequences for the neo-Nazis – the Format-18 studio he headed ceased to exist; the NSO, in which he held a leading position, fell apart and also ceased to exist as a public actor. However, Martsinkevich's sentence clearly stands apart from the general tendency of prosecutions of ultra-right activists of nationwide reach.

Regarding the attention of law-enforcement officers being deflected onto the prosecution of insignificant crimes, it is impossible not to note a clear tendency to prosecute for declarations, albeit racist, on internet forums. In 2008 no less than 5 people in 4 regions were convicted for this. There is no doubt that hate propaganda is present in vast quantities on the internet, including also on the Russian-language internet. It is all the more present on internet forums,

³⁶ On 16 January 2009, M. Martsinkevich was found guilty of faking the execution of a person in the name of the 'Russian Ku-Klux-Klan', but this clip was not advertised as a 'Format 18' clip but was specially filmed in response to a request of an ATV journalist.

not least because, in contrast to the mass media, this is an uncensored environment in which it is possible for anyone, including xenophobes, to speak out. However, the logic behind the prosecution of those who speak out in forums is impossible to grasp; it seems most likely that the choice of the suspects/defendants is arbitrary. How much these people influence their audience is not clear; mostly likely the danger posed to society by their rejoinders is not great. If the racist declarations are left on an extremely aggressive racist site, as in the case of one of the Samara neo-Nazis, such a prosecution is nonsensical: in this case it would have been more logical to punish the organizers and ideologists of the site, or the whole community rather than just one supporter. Overall, against a background of the active and practically unimpeded functioning of the resources of ultra-right groups, the leaders of which remain at large and freely pursue their activities, the prosecution of forum participants looks ineffective, and is perceived more as unreasonable repression 'for reporting purposes' than as a real struggle with hate propaganda.

However, there is no doubt that there were also positive examples of the prosecution of internet propagandists: in Lipetsk it was precisely the creator of a neo-Nazi site who was held responsible for the incitement of hatred, and in Novosibirsk it was the ideologist of one of the local neo-pagan groups conducting propaganda on the internet.

Altogether, out of 49 successful prosecutions there were no less than 11 convictions specifically for internet propaganda, and this yet again contests the repeated assertion that there isn't a sufficient legislative framework in Russia today for the prosecution of 'Cyberhate'.

The sentences for incitement of hatred handed down to employees of the law-enforcement agencies were especially important events in 2008. Moreover, these sentences were connected with ultra-right activity (a police officer from Leningrad region, who maintained a neo-Nazi blog and internet site) as well as manifestations of 'everyday' xenophobia (a Stavropol police officer, who not only did not interrupt the racist battery of an Azerbaijani waiter by colleagues, but provided an insulting commentary).

The ultra-right's connections with law enforcement agency employees and the prevalence of xenophobic sentiments amongst police have long ago been discussed. Until now, however, as far as we know, acting employees of the law enforcement agencies have not been called to account for aggressive xenophobia.³⁷

³⁷ At the beginning of the 1990s in Petersburg, there was an attempt to invoke Iurii Beliaev – who was then working for the police – for incitement of hatred, but he was saved by the immunity given to Duma deputies, and he subsequently left the police.

Federal lists of extremist organizations and materials

In April 2008, six years after the principle of the creation of a federal list of extremist organizations was added to the anti-extremist legislation, this list was first published. Initially, it included six organizations banned in 2004-2007 (the list is not ordered in any fashion – it begins with the NBP). In 2008 it was updated twice: on April 10, the religious association Nurdjular were declared extremist, and on July 17 so was the Akhtubinsk people's movement 'For God's Empire'. At the beginning of 2009 there were eight organizations on the list. In reality there are a few more banned extremist organizations (we know of a further three at least, banned only in 2003-2008).

Moreover, nowhere on the Ministry of Justice website, unfortunately, does it explain that besides the organizations enumerated above, all organizations banned as terrorist are also considered extremist, since in accordance with the law 'On combating extremist activity' terrorism is a type of extremism (which is also confirmed by the way in which article 282 of the Criminal Code is enforced). The list of terrorist organizations is not even published on the Ministry of Justice website. There were 18 organizations on this list at the beginning of 2009, the majority of which do not operate on Russian territory.³⁸

The federal list of extremist materials began to be published in 2007. During 2008 it grew almost fourfold: from 79 to 301 items (and in the first three months of 2009, to 361 items). The list grew so swiftly that the *Russian newspaper (Rossiiskaia gazeta)*, authorized to publish list updates, often didn't manage to do this.

Of the 222 items which were added to the list in 2008,³⁹ 82 are Islamic materials, by all appearances, removed from members of Hizb ut Tahrir and other Islamist groups. Yet another 100 are the materials of ultra-right (mostly neo-pagan) groups, and the remainder is historical writings, political pamphlets, materials produced by minority national and separatist groups (Chechens, Altai, Tatars) and by new religious movements, etc.

Setting aside the legitimacy of the ban on a great number of these materials – which we have serious doubts about⁴⁰ we will focus only on the general

³⁸ See the list of organisations found to be extremist by the Russian courts [as of the beginning of 2009] on the SOVA Center website, *Natsionalizm i ksenofobia v Rossii* (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/4DF39C9/A12DD8E>).

³⁹ In fact we are talking about 213 items, as nine items are included in the list twice.

⁴⁰ The question of materials which, in our opinion, have been forbidden illegitimately, is explored in the report *Inappropriate Enforcement of Anti-extremist Legislation in Russia in 2008* in this book.

negative and positive tendencies of the banning of material and the creation of the list which appeared in 2008.

It is positive that the courts are beginning to ban video clips with scenes of racist assault as extremist. One may hope that this curtails the fashion of distributing such material on the internet, or at least limits access to it. And already, without doubt, the recognition of such video material as extremist helps to prevent its distribution by widely-accessed mass media, above all by Russian television channels.⁴¹

However, there are far more problems with the list than there are reasons to praise it. The swift growth of the list and the widening of sanctions connected with its existence (see below), elicited a whole series of legislative lacunae. While these gaps remain unaddressed, the list will primarily be a repressive instrument which facilitates the amassing of anti-extremist statistics but offers no obstacle to the dissemination of materials presenting a real danger to society.

Firstly, the quality of the list itself evokes the largest amount of censure. Besides the fact that duplications (currently no fewer than nine), and sometimes evident mistakes,⁴² make it on to the list, the majority of items included in the list simply can't be identified. For example, the lists of Buguruslan, Magnitogorsk and Tuimazy court decisions comprising 42 items in total, do not contain any kind of publication details. The materials (at least the printed ones) are described by external appearance: by covers; by first and last phrase; by format – in a word, by any outward feature. They are, however, not described by the bibliographic standards which would really help to identify a text.

Meanwhile this problem has already generated at least one criminal case. On 16 May in Moscow the prosecutor's office instigated legal proceedings under article 282 part 1 of the Criminal Code in relation to Aslambek Ezhaev, head of the publishing department of Moscow Islamic University, under the auspices of the Council of Muftis of Russia. Ezhaev reprinted Muhammad Ali Al-Hashimi's *The Ideal Muslim: The True Islamic Personality as Defined in the Qur'an and Sunnah* (often shorted to *The Personality of a Muslim* in Russian), banned in 2007.⁴³ Charges under article 282 were dropped only at the beginning of 2009, as the defense proved that the banned text and the text published by Ezhaev are not identical. This at least means that these texts were checked.

⁴¹ On the problem of distribution, see Kozhevnikova, Galina 'Skinkhed televizionnyi', SOVA Center, *Natsionalizm i ksenofobia v Rossii*, 15 May 2006 (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/213716E/21728E3/7502623>).

⁴² Swiftly corrected, however.

⁴³ This ban provoked a stormy reaction from the Muslim community and even from the muftis in 2007, and was, to all appearances, illegal.

The practice of removing books of this name from shops, mosques and private individuals clearly does not allow for the checking of texts.

Secondly, serious doubts are raised by the fact that leaflets – albeit with clearly illegal contents – are being deemed extremist. A leaflet is a leaflet, often without any publication details and available only within a local distribution area. Given that their texts are unknown, and they are identified at best only by the first and last phrase, there nothing to prevent the activists concerned from circumventing this ban. In practice the banning of leaflets (and there are no less than 50 on the official list – a sixth of the total!)⁴⁴ appears to be an obvious simulation of anti-extremist activity. And this is to say nothing about certain absurdities in the practice of deeming materials which *de facto* exist only in criminal case files to be extremist. Here we refer to Alexander Vtulkin's text which make threats against the governor Valentin Matvienko, deleted from the internet back in 2006; and to Oleg Kitter's internet resource 'Aleks-Inform', which has also not existed for three years.

Thirdly, as before, the moment at which someone may be held responsible for disseminating material deemed extremist remains unexplained – is it from the time of the court's decision or from the moment that the material is included in the federal list? The above-mentioned A. Ezhaev completed the dissemination of the book after it had been banned by one of the town courts of Orenburg region, but before it had appeared on the federal list, and argued accordingly that he didn't know about the ban. This in itself did not halt the criminal proceedings, however.

Fourthly, for all the absurdities of a whole series of extremist bans, not only does the mechanism for withdrawing material from the list (as indeed the possibility of revising the list as such – for example, correcting it according to bibliographical standards) not yet exist, but as far as we know, the creation of such a mechanism has not yet even been discussed.⁴⁵

And finally, as before, the question of the method of preserving and distributing of prohibited material to libraries remains unresolved. Here anti-extremist legislation would appear to contradict library legislation: the former forbids the mass dissemination of extremist material while the latter forbids libraries from refusing readers access to any material. Meanwhile, the practice of issuing anti-extremist warnings to libraries is rocketing. And this means that the libraries

⁴⁴ Not counting a whole array of right-wing radical newsletters, included in the list as 'leaflets'.

⁴⁵ However, the unofficial correction of the list, placed on the site of the Ministry of Justice, does happen: they have corrected the date of court decisions passed, added information about court cases which ban materials.

are being held responsible for the law and the implementing authorities' lack of care in the development of a mechanism to ensure the fulfillment of the law. That said, like the banning of leaflets, the attack on libraries looks like simply a simulation of anti-extremist activity, since mass dissemination through libraries isn't really happening.

Other

Besides the criminal prosecution of xenophobic violence and propaganda, and the banning of materials and organizations, the practice of anti-extremist prosecution under administrative law is actively developing. It is impossible to understand the dynamic of those punishments issued by the administrative court, since information about this appears very haphazardly, but evidently it is happening. Thus, several cases are known of administrative punishment for the distribution of materials deemed extremist, for the display of Nazi symbols, for the sale of Wehrmacht troop memorabilia by antique dealers (in this last case it is worth noting that this question is unresolved, as is the question of the libraries, indeed, historical re-enactors and collectors of war memorabilia without any ideological predilections suffer from such bans, for example).

The number of 'acts of procuracy reaction' about the results of checks on adherence to anti-extremist legislation is rocketing. On January 12, 2009 the Prosecutor General of Russia, Iurii Chaika announced that if in 2007 '*a little over 12 thousand acts of procuracy reactions were introduced in connection with the violation of legislation on inter-ethnic relations and the counteraction of extremism, then in nine months of the following year, it was almost 29 thousand.*'⁴⁶ And this number doesn't seem fantastic to us, as any official reaction by the prosecutor's office counts as an 'act of procuracy reaction'. This means warnings, cautions, recommendations to organizations and government bureaucrats, relating to the fulfillment of any nuance of legislation, moreover not only anti-extremist legislation but also, for example, migration law.⁴⁷ The majority of 'acts of reaction', without doubt, cannot be called illegitimate. However, this degree of activity looks more like the artificial inflation of anti-extremist reporting, a masquerade

⁴⁶ Besides this, Iurii Chaika announced that currently 4.6 thousand lawsuits have been brought before the courts to decide whether or not organisations and materials are extremist. However, this declaration raises serious doubts. He is probably mistaken.

⁴⁷ For example, in the prosecutor's official reports one may find that improperly executed checks of the correctness of completed announcements about the arrival of foreign citizens by recipients etc. is a violation of anti-extremist legislation. See *Prokuraturoi Slavskogo raiona vyivleny mnogochislennye narusheniia...* Official site of the Prosecutor of Kaliningrad region, 20 June 2008 (<http://www.prokuratura39.ru/00news/20080620-03.html>).

of anti-extremist activity, rather than real preventative action against real crime and infringement of the law. An example of this is ‘acts of reaction’ as a result of legislative lacunae – how this arose in relation to the warnings to libraries is described above.

However, one should note also the positive aspects of such activity. In 2008 we saw the first cases in which the prosecutor’s office obliged municipal authorities to paint over neo-Nazi symbols on the territory within their jurisdiction.

The opaque nature of the prosecutor’s ‘anti-extremist’ activity as a whole remains a great problem: it is impossible to understand what the prosecutor’s focus of attention is, when, why and how sensible and legitimate that attention is. In other words, it is impossible to analyze whether the quality of preventative supervision has improved.

Against this background, the activity of the Federal Service for the Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Communications (*Rossviaz’konnadzor*) in 2008 looks more reasonable, although no less active, than a year earlier, apart from the fact that this year the proportion of illegitimate warnings also rose. 28 ‘anti-extremist’ warnings were issued to the Russian media by the department (including six illegitimate ones) in 2008, while in 2007 there were 43 (including seven illegitimate ones).

On the basis of two warnings issued by the department in 2008, a legal judgment was made (in contrast to the decision of 2007 – entirely legitimate) on November 26 to shut the newspaper *Duel*, which incidentally was not implemented.

Unfortunately, one must note that the activity of other government bodies in the sphere of combating aggressive xenophobia has little effect. Often it amounts to the task of ‘promoting tolerance’, which is by no means the same thing. The ‘promotion of tolerance’, as a rule, is handled within the framework of the Soviet paradigm of ‘promoting the friendship of peoples’, by means of organizing mass cultural events with ethnic elements. Without calling into question the necessity of conducting such festivals and concerts, it seems to us that this is extremely ineffective as a measure for combating xenophobia.⁴⁸ However, we do not yet observe any signs of a change in the approach of government bureaucrats to the problem.

Translated by S. Rock.

⁴⁸ The annual autumn fights between Armenian and Azeri students of the People’s Friendship University of Russia (*Rossiiskii Universitet Druzhyby Narodov*), which occur during such festivals, already demonstrate the ineffectiveness of this approach.

Alexander Verkhovsky, Olga Sibireva

Restrictions and Challenges in 2008 on Freedom of Conscience in Russia

The SOVA Center for Information and Analysis presents its third annual report on freedom of conscience in the Russian Federation.¹

Events that occurred prior to 2008 were presented in the previous report;² this report therefore only contains further updates of earlier developments. This report does not attempt to describe in detail the past year’s developments in the public religious sphere; specific events mentioned here only serve to illustrate the trends observed.

Issues and stories which we believe to be related to misuse of anti-extremist legislation are presented in a separate dedicated report.³ In 2008, many incidents of actual or attempted excessive anti-extremist enforcement were freedom of conscience cases, and these are described in a dedicated chapter of the report on ‘excessive anti-extremism’; to avoid duplication of content they are not described here.

Summary

There were no significant changes in 2008 as compared to the previous year. As before, problems faced by religious groups were reported country-wide and ranged from being denied a space for their activities to dealing with local authorities in general. As previously, ‘unpopular’ religious minorities came under pressure from larger religious organizations (sometimes of the same religion), the mass media and government. As previously, faith groups and individual believers are vulnerable to religious xenophobia. On the other hand, the fight against ‘religious extremism’ is used as a pretext to suppress human rights – in

¹ This report is based on data from the SOVA Center monitoring program. This information is presented in its entirety in the Religion in a Secular Society section (<http://religion.sova-center.ru>), including references to media and internet-based sources. Throughout the report, we provide references only to those sources which are not to be found on the website.

² A. Verkhovsky, O. Sibireva, ‘Restrictions and Challenges in 2007 on Freedom of Conscience in Russia’, in *Xenophobia, Freedom of Conscience and Anti-Extremism in Russia in 2007*, (Moscow: SOVA Center, 2008), pp. 80-106.

³ See report *Inappropriate Enforcement of Anti-extremist Legislation in Russia in 2008* in this book.

particular, to limit freedom of conscience (the latter trend is on the rise, see our report on excessive anti-extremism for details).

It is difficult to say whether the overall situation has changed for better or for worse for religious groups, but one negative trend deserves a mention: attacks against religious buildings tend to involve more dangerous methods than before – in addition to increased arson attacks, explosives were used in some cases.

In 2007, local authorities began to put pressure on religious educational facilities, such as Sunday schools, which were unlawfully required to obtain a license for educational activities. In 2008 this trend appeared to be successfully stopped in the Smolensk Methodist Church case – the local authorities had gone too far by liquidating the church, and the latter won the case in court.

In some ways the government made certain concessions to religious organizations in general by providing for the integration of religious educational establishments in the country's educational system, while in other ways religious denominations were stripped of their former privileges, such as deferral (in effect, exemption) from military duty for priests. None of the radical proposals to limit freedom of conscience – whether by criminalization of blasphemy or by excessive scrutiny of religious instruction – were approved at federal level.

State support of religion is not a new phenomenon in today's Russia. In terms of support, priority has always been given to the Russian Orthodox Church (henceforth, ROC), even though some regions have witnessed a growing role for Islam. However, in general, the Russian state has been and remains secular, albeit with some reservations.

The situation has been stable recently. Specifically, we have not seen any notable penetration of religion into general schools. However, in spite of the ROC's failure to meet its key objectives in the area of education, there was evidence of increased pressure against secularity in 2008. Firstly, there has been a growing tendency towards prosecution for blasphemy under the umbrella of extremism. Secondly, the regime in Chechnia has demonstratively been established as non-secular. Thirdly, we see churches prevailing over other types of organizations whenever their interests clash, evidencing increased overall support of the former by the authorities.

Legislation on religious organizations

In February, the State Duma adopted amendments to the Law on Education and the Federal Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations on the third reading (the first reading dates back to 2007); the amendments dealing with licenses and accreditation of religious educational establishments were then approved by the Federation Council and signed into law by President

Putin. The amendments (discussed in detail in our previous report) allow religious educational establishments to offer training in line with official educational standards, so that their graduates may obtain state-recognized degrees (except that the document [diploma] certifying their degree does not have the Russian national symbol printed on it).

Also in February, a Presidential Decree repealed deferrals from military duty for priests (alongside other categories of citizens). The law caused protests in the Russian Orthodox Church. In March, members of the St. Petersburg Legislative Assembly appealed to the President asking to restore deferrals for priests, but the Decree remained in force.

In April, the Duma rejected yet another proposal to switch to the Julian calendar used by the ROC. MPs found that the proposal was based on religious preferences, in contravention of the Russian Constitution which forbids any faith to be declared the official religion of the state. Of course, the proposal had no chance of being accepted, but the reasons given for its rejection are important since they reaffirm the secular nature of the Russian state.

The Duma also rejected legislative proposals made by Alexander Chuev (A Just Russia party, *Spravedlivaia Rossiia*) to toughen liability for criminal offenses against priests and to criminalize the desecration of religious symbols.

On 4 July, the Duma adopted and the Federation Council approved amendments to certain federal laws intended 'to improve the functioning of the Russian Government', subsequently signed into law by President Medvedev on 23 July. Among other legislation, the amendments concerned the Federal Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations, mainly changing the procedure of theological expert review at regional level.⁴

For years, various authorities have been considering ways to regulate alternative health practitioners. In April, the State Duma Committee on economic policies and entrepreneurship recommended that the Duma adopt at the first reading a bill proposed in 2007 which amends articles 7, 24, and 38 of the Federal Law on Advertising to restrict the advertisement of magicians, healers and sorcerers. But the bill was never considered by the Federal Duma, nor was its counterpart considered by the Moscow City Duma.

A bill to amend the Law on Combating Extremist Activity was introduced in the State Duma, but then promptly withdrawn. The bill, in particular, would provide for increased scrutiny of religious instruction.

⁴ The real influence of expert councils depends to a great extent on their composition. The appointment of the well-known 'warrior against sects' Aleksandr Dvorkin as chair of the expert council under the Ministry of Justice should be taken as a very bad sign. This council has almost no significant academic expertise in the field of religious studies.

Russian regions adopted new legislation to regulate the transfer of real estate to religious groups. Specifically, Tatarstan adopted a law on the *gratis* transfer of religious buildings and installations, together with land plots under them, to religious organizations. In St. Petersburg, amendments to the 2007 legislation were launched in May to allow for the transfer of integrated chapels and prayer rooms in municipally-owned buildings to religious organizations.

Difficulties with regard to places of worship

In 2008, religious organizations continued to face various difficulties in connection with the construction and use of religious buildings; such difficulties affected Orthodox Christians from various jurisdictions, Muslims, and Protestants.

Problems with the construction of religious buildings. In Moscow region, addressing the first Moscow Region Assembly of Peoples on 23 May, Vice Governor Aleksei Panteleev said that local authorities in 12 municipalities had denied Orthodox communities' requests to build churches and chapels in cemeteries. The official promised the assembly that he would sort this problem out.

In Moscow, the construction of a temple for the Krishna Consciousness Society has not yet started; this construction has been at the center of a conflict since 2005. Even though the decision to allocate a land plot in Molzhaninovo to Krishna worshippers was made in 2007, local residents – supported by Orthodox Christian activists and the Locals (*Mestnye*) youth movement – continue to protest the construction.

In November, spokesmen of the Russian Orthodox Church voiced concerns about the Moscow Government's ban on infill development. They were concerned that the construction of numerous churches would not be permitted under the new rules.

Problems encountered by active houses of worship. In May, St. Petersburg Governor Valentina Matvienko announced her intention to terminate a contract with the Lutheran community and to transfer their Cathedral of St Anne to the city's balance sheet. Under the terms of this contract, the building had been returned to the Lutherans on condition that they renovate it at their own cost, which they had failed to do.

A lease contract with the Jewish community in Samara was terminated for the same reason (the judgment was finalized in January 2009).

A court in Vladimir banned a Baptist community from legalizing as its property the land plot under and around the prayer house.

In a number of cases reported in 2008, active places of worship were transferred to other owners, who in most cases represented the Russian Orthodox Church.

In April 2008, a church of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (ROAC) in the village of Desiatukha, Starodubsk district of Briansk region, was handed over by bureaucrats to the Moscow Patriarchate.

In February, the Court of Arbitration in Vladimir region instituted proceedings into 12 claims filed by the territorial Office of Public Property (Rosimushchestvo) against the Suzdal Eparchy of the ROAC. Rosimushchestvo demanded that the ROAC return part of its property to the state, including certain federally-protected monuments of history and culture in Suzdal and some districts of Vladimir region formerly made available to the ROAC free of charge. Preliminary court hearings lasted for a year, and in February 2009 the court gave 13 churches back to the state, including the Tsar Constantine (*Tsare-konstantinovskii*) Cathedral in Suzdal, the main cathedral of the ROAC.

In July, the Lipetsk region Court of Arbitration opened proceedings against the local authorities following a complaint by the ROC Lipetsk Eparchy which was seeking to repossess a formerly Orthodox church building now occupied by a Baptist community. The Baptists had been using the church since late 1980s, but on 19 April 2007 the regional government handed the building over to the Orthodox Eparchy. The Baptists agreed to leave the renovated building on condition that they were provided with an alternative place of worship, but since none of the options offered by the city authorities proved satisfactory, they did not vacate the building.

In November, representatives of the ROC approached the Old Believers' community of the Church of the Sign of the Most Holy Mother of God (*vo imia Znamenii Presviatoi Bogoroditsy*) in the village of Aleshino, Moscow region, with documents signed by the regional Ministry of Culture certifying that the Old Believers' church had been transferred to the ROC. The reason appears to be the Old Believers' failure to legalize a protection contract for the church building (listed as part of the nation's cultural heritage) before a certain deadline established by the Ministry.

Positive resolution of conflicts involving houses of worship. A few earlier conflicts around the construction of mosques in various regions were finally settled in 2008. The Muslim community in Kaluga was able to complete the construction of a mosque, while the authorities in Kaliningrad and Kostomuksha allocated land plots to local Muslim communities for the construction of mosques.

The decision to demolish a mosque in Tiumen (the village of Matmasy) was quashed, but new complications emerged due to a conflict between two Muslim communities competing for the use of this mosque.

Adventists in Novosibirsk affirmed their ownership of a house of prayer and the residential accommodation attached to it, winning their dispute with the city administration which began in 2005.

State patronage of certain religious organizations

As previously, it was common practice for the government to finance religious organizations from federal and regional budgets, often to support renovation and restoration of religious buildings. The governments of Moscow, Moscow region, Belgorod, Volgograd, Novgorod and Tver regions, and Tatarstan provided funds for this purpose in 2008. Most frequently the Russian Orthodox Church was the beneficiary, but Muslim, Catholic and Protestant buildings were also financed. Many of the beneficiaries were cultural heritage sites in need of renovation, and their support by government did not arouse any criticism.

There were reports of regional administrations encouraging local businesses and the public to donate to the construction of churches. For example, the government of Krasnodar region launched a program to support construction firms and other businesses involved in the construction, reconstruction and renovation of Orthodox churches. Heads of services in the Mayor's Administration in Kursk announced that they had each donated a day's salary for the reconstruction of the Church in the Korennaia Pustyn Monastery, and appealed to the public to do the same.

There were several reports of government-controlled companies financing the construction of churches. The size of donations was notable: in October, Rosneft contributed 60 million rubles for the construction of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church in the Korennaia Pustyn Monastery in Kursk. In November, Gorkovskii Railway donated 300 million rubles for the renovation of a few parish buildings and the Church of the Feast Commemorating the Restoration of the Church of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ (*Khram Voskreseniia Slovushchego*) in Nizhnii Novgorod region.

The donation of substantial land plots to religious organizations for use free of charge continued. The Tatarstan Ministry of Land and Property Relations allocated 25 hectares of land to the Mother of God of the Seven Lakes Hermitage (*Sedmierznaia Bogoroditskaia Pusty'*) monastery.

More often, real estate was transferred to various religious organizations (as property or for gratis use), in most cases to the ROC. In June, the ROC Bishop's Council urged for an *'early and rightful return of its property to the Church, primarily the churches and sacred objects, and those buildings and land plots which are needed for the restoration of charitable, social, educational, awareness-raising, research and cultural activities of the Russian Orthodox Church.'* Eparchies

increasingly insist on having church property back. For example, the Bishop of Perm and Solikamsk Irinarkh (Grezin) insists that all property owned by the eparchy before 1917 should be returned to it.

Yet the costs of maintaining church buildings are high, and in some cases, rather than transfer religious buildings to faith organizations, authorities do the opposite. Thus, the administration of Omsk region appropriated the Dormition (*Uspenskii*) Cathedral, and the building is now managed by the regional Ministry of Culture.

The authorities' position often makes one think of arbitrary restitution. Property transfers include federal and regional cultural monuments (e.g. in June nine religious sites, which are regional monuments of history and culture, were transferred to the Cheboksary Eparchy), as well as buildings which are not intended for religious use and property which has never before belonged to the Church.

Even though in most cases such transfers are peaceful and sensitive to the needs of former owners or occupants (e.g. local authorities in Tver financed the construction of a new building for the local museum as the church formerly occupied by the museum was handed over to the Eparchy), quite often the transfer of buildings has caused conflicts. Some of these are described below.

The dispute over the Ryazan Kremlin Complex continues. All religious sites in its territory were handed over to the Eparchy before, except the Dormition Cathedral used jointly by the museum and the Church. In 2008, the cathedral was fully transferred to the Eparchy, together with the western part of Oleg's Palace. The museum was not offered any other space for relocation (the museum was required to vacate 500 square meters by 1 January 2009, even though no space is available to relocate the exhibits; at the time of writing, the museum has dismantled the displays) and was barred access to its main display, *From Rus' to Russia*. Throughout the year, numerous public protests were held in Ryazan and in Moscow. The Public Committee in Defense of the Ryazan Kremlin, having lost its attempts to challenge the decision in the Ryazan courts, filed an application with European Court of Human Rights alleging denial of effective remedy.

Yet another museum faces eviction by the Eparchy in Yaroslavl. In January, the Eparchy launched court proceedings against the Uglich State Museum of History, Architecture and Art, seeking to evict the museum from the building of Transfiguration of the Savior (*Spaso-Preobrazhenskii*) Cathedral. The Eparchy is also claiming the museum's collection of icons with the promise of 'responsible storage'.

The Valaam Monastery continued to pressure the remaining local residents to leave the island, without offering them adequate compensation. In August, court bailiffs evicted local resident Fillip Muskevich and his family from the

refectory of the Resurrection or Red (*Voskresenskii* or *Krasnyi*) Skete, after the Sortavala District Court handed the rooms over to the monastery. Mr. Muskevich protested against the eviction and informed the court that his family had no other place to live, but the court dismissed the protest. The islander intends to pursue his complaint in the European Court of Human Rights, and the Court has already accepted his application.

A few major conflicts occurred in Moscow. In April, court bailiffs interrupted classes at the Department of History, Political Science and Law of the Russian State Humanitarian University (RSHU) at 7-9 Nikolskaia Street and ordered students and teaching staff to leave the building. They did so to enforce the Moscow authorities' decision, dating back to 2004, to hand over part of the university's rooms to the Our Savior behind the Icons (*Zaikonospasskii*) Monastery. Following the incident, the Federal Agency for Federal Property Management (Rosimushchestvo) challenged the Moscow City Department of Property Management in the Moscow Court of Arbitration, arguing that the decision to evict the RSHU was unlawful. In June, Moscow City Government came up with a plan for the renovation and development of the Our Savior behind the Icons and St. Nicholas Greek (*Nikolo-Grechskii*) Monasteries, involving the transfer of properties at No 15, as well as Nos 7-9 in Nikolskaia Street, also occupied by the RSHU, to the Russian Orthodox Church. In August, before any ruling by the Court of Arbitration, bailiffs evicted the Department of History, Political Science and Law from their classrooms.

In January, a portion of the Taganskii Park in Moscow was handed over to the Intercession (*Pokrovskii*) Convent, its original owner before 1917. Sergei Baidakov, prefect of the Central Administrative District of the city, insisted that the transfer would not interfere with local residents' rights in any way, but the community protested against the authorities' decision. Moscow City Duma member Sergei Mitrokhin supported the local residents and argued that the transfer of park land contravened the Land Code.

Moscow City Government handed over the building of a French School, a source of conflict since the mid-90s, to the Monastery of the Meeting [of the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God] (*Sretenskii*) Monastery. The Moscow Government has decided to relocate the school to another building in the center of Moscow, and Mayor Luzhkov intends to build a bell tower in its place.

Objects of worship formerly exhibited by museums have been handed over to religious organizations (mainly to the ROC). Sometimes, as was the case with holy relics in precious shrines handed over to the ROC from the Moscow Kremlin Museum, such relics did not belong to the religious organization to begin with. In 2008, following a decision of Governor Petr Sumin, the Cheliab-

insk region Museum of Local History handed over a shrine containing the holy relics of the Apostle Andrew, part of the Museum's collection since 1929, to the Cheliabinsk Eparchy. The Integrated Open-air Museum in Moscow (comprising Kolomenskoe, Izmailovo, Lefortovo and Liublino) donated its icons, books and clerical robes to the Nikolo-Ugreshskii Monastery. The Nizhnii Novgorod History Museum agreed to make available the Oran Mother of God of Vladimir icon to the Nizhnii Novgorod Eparchy for three years. The Eparchy, in return, agreed to meet Rosokhrankultura's heritage preservation requirements.

It was reported in November that Andrei Rublev's Trinity icon might be transferred from the Tretyakov Gallery to the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra for three days, as part of celebrations for a feast day. Earlier, in September, a relevant agreement was reached at a meeting between Patriarch Aleksii II and the Minister of Culture, Alexander Avdeev. According to a staff member who made the negotiations public, even though the Ministry of Culture did not issue any instructions to this effect, and the Gallery's extended meeting of restoration and conservation experts warned against moving the ancient icon, the top management of the Tretyakov Gallery was prepared to make the icon available to the Lavra, and had even ordered a safe box for its transportation. The story had broad public resonance. The community of art critics and experts appealed to D. Medvedev and V. Putin, urging them to save the icon – an important part of Russia's heritage. Some experts are convinced that Patriarch Aleksii's request to allow the icon to be transported to the Lavra for three days was a test to see whether it would be possible to move the Trinity around in the future.

We should also mention other forms of government support for religious organizations.

According to the Presidential Administration, the funding made available for Islamic education doubled from 400 to 800 million rubles in 2008. The Administration is also involved in the distribution of private funding: its Advisor Aleksei Grishin sits on the Board of the Foundation for the Support of Islamic Culture, Science and Education.

In turn, the Russian Orthodox Church demanded the same type of preferential treatment. In June, the ROC Bishops' Council argued not only that public funding should be available to support the teaching of courses in mainstream schools run by the Orthodox Church, as long as such courses meet government-established standards, but also that Orthodox theological schools should be financed from the public budget 'like the theological education of some other religious communities'. At the moment, however, only Islamic education is supported by the government, clearly in an attempt to prevent radical Islamism, whereas other religions do not raise this type of concern. According to A. Grishin, the

economic meltdown may cause cuts in the funding of any program supported by the aforementioned Foundation, except for religious education.

The support given to dominant religions is not only material. The authorities continue to allocate religious holidays official status. Thus, certain regions with a substantial Muslim population – such as the Republics of the North Caucasus, Bashkortostan, Tatarstan and Stavropol region – declared official holidays on Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. Radonitsa (an Orthodox Christian festival commemorating the dead) was declared a holiday in Kemerovo, Volgograd and Smolensk regions, and Buddha's birthday is a day off in Kalmykia.

In Chechnia, the sale of alcohol was banned during Ramadan, in accordance with Muslim morals. Introduced by President Ramzan Kadyrov some time ago, certain rules observed in Chechnia are clearly inconsistent with the secularity of the state – for example, a prohibition on women entering a government building without headscarves. Vladimir Ustinov, the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Russian President in the Southern Federal District, effectively supports Kadyrov's policies; he has urged federal servicemen and police stationed in Chechnia 'to ask the mufti of Chechnia and the Orthodox Christian church official for blessing, to cooperate closely with them, and to seek their advice'.

In September, civil servants in many Russian regions were forced to attend funeral services to mark 40 days of war in South Ossetia; related complaints came from Volgograd, Ivanovo, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Saransk, Saratov, and Tomsk.

Other examples of discrimination and unreasonable interference

Liquidation of religious organizations. In 2008, the authorities continued their scrutiny of religious organizations and closed many of them for missing the reporting deadlines. However, this Federal Registration Service (FRS) activity did not target religious organizations specifically, but affected the entire non-profit sector over the past two years.

In fact religious organizations do not have to comply with particularly tough reporting requirements, unlike many other NGOs. But the mere fact of closer supervision and scrutiny is a problem for many religious groups. To prevent massive closures of religious organizations, the FRS held a seminar with representatives of centralized religious organizations to educate them about compliance with the relevant regulations.

In October, the Russian Ministry of Justice (which took over FRS functions) made public its intention to liquidate 56 religious organizations, including Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist groups for 'failure to submit the required

information and documents to the Ministry of Justice after an extended period of time'. Some of these groups, though very few, were not active at the time, but most organizations promptly filed the required reports, and by late November only 19 groups remained on the list, facing liquidation.

In fact the tactics used by the Ministry of Justice were met with approval from certain religious organizations. The leaders of the three centralized Muslim authorities, for example, made statements in support of the Ministry of Justice policies, observing that these policies may prove helpful in filtering out certain Muslim centers which are not particularly active or needed. Some others, however, perceived the Ministry's warning as an attempt to intimidate religious organizations. For the Ministry it was probably a preventative action.

We do not have complete data on the number of active religious organizations closed for missing their reporting deadlines, i.e. unlawfully, since this minor violation should not warrant liquidation. Here are just a few examples known to us.

In Staryi Oskol, Belgorod region, a Methodist group was closed for failing to submit its annual report. The court ordered the community's liquidation in March, and in May a Methodist prayer meeting in a private home was interrupted by FSB agents who broke in saying that the Methodist community was 'an alien body for the city and agents of American interests'.

As well as the Ministry of Justice, the tax authorities have caused problems for religious organizations. By law, a legal entity may be liquidated for failing to submit its annual balance sheet and/or for not using its bank account. This provision – adopted to discourage fly-by-night companies – may be enforced against non-profits, including religious organizations, even though many such groups make very few financial transactions and their bank accounts may be inactive for a year or so, plus they do not have a staff accountant and often forget to file the so-called 'zero balance sheet' with the tax authorities. We do not know how many organizations which were still in existence, albeit not very active, had their registration revoked; in 2007 there were hundreds of them, and there is no reason to believe that the situation improved in 2008. Two Baptist groups in Lipetsk, for example, had their registration revoked for missing the tax filing deadline (one of them, which is occupying the contested ROC church building, subsequently challenged the decision in court and won).

As previously, some religious organizations faced pressure to obtain proper licenses to deliver education. However, in many cases they could arguably – and in some cases definitely – operate without such a license. A license is required by law for general education and for the training of priests, whereas giving instruction in one's own faith is a fundamental right of a religious organization and does not require a license. What sort of education is being delivered should therefore be determined in each case. However, most local authorities do not

bother to examine the circumstances of each case and are guided in their decisions by the titles of educational courses or institutions (which may describe themselves, for example, as ‘colleges’).

In March, the United Methodist Church in Smolensk was liquidated by the court at the request of the local prosecutor’s office, on the grounds that its ‘Our Little Hearts’ Sunday school was not a separate legal entity and did not have a license to teach. The liquidation request was preceded by a statement of Bishop Ignatii (Punin) of the ROC Eparchy in Smolensk, accusing the Methodists of inciting religious hatred. In June, the liquidation ruling was quashed by the Russian Supreme Court.

The Biblical Center of Evangelical Christians (Pentecostals) in the Republic of Chuvashia, liquidated in 2007 for operating without a license to deliver education, filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights in May challenging the legality of the liquidation.

Apparently, the cases in Chuvashia and Smolensk caused the authorities to change their policy. In August, the prosecutor’s office of Industrialnyi District in Izhevsk instituted administrative proceedings under article 19.20, part 1, of the Administrative Code against pastor Vitalii Khaidukov of the Act of Faith Evangelical Christian Church, for setting up a Sunday school for children and youngsters and a Bible instruction course for those wishing to be baptized. But the Magistrate Court of Industrial District failed to find an administrative offense and dropped the case before the end of the month.

In December, Solntsevo Court in Moscow refused to liquidate Emmanuel, a Pentecostal Seminary, for operating without a license to teach (the same reason that led to Emmanuel’s inclusion by the Ministry of Justice in the above-mentioned list of organizations to be liquidated). By this landmark ruling the judge challenged the stated position of the Ministry of Justice; moreover, the Moscow judge indirectly challenged the Moscow government, since the reason the Seminary was denied a license was its lack of a permanent office, which, in turn, was due to its longstanding conflict with the Moscow authorities (one may recall a series of rallies organized by Emmanuel to protest against the Moscow Mayor’s policy).

In June, the prosecutor’s office in Kirov District of Samara requested that the court liquidate Light of the World, a Pentecostal organization. An inspection determined that the organization was training students of the Awakening (*Probuzhdenie*) Institute without a proper license for educational activity. In January 2009, the court rejected the prosecutor’s request because there was insufficient evidence to prove that the Awakening Institute is affiliated with the Light of the World Church.

The situation as regards Scientologists deserves a separate mention. A court in Samara satisfied the regional prosecutor’s request to liquidate the Center

of Dianetics; the Court held that the organization had offered medical services – i.e. their auditing procedures – for three years without a proper license. The regional prosecutor’s office in Novosibirsk requested that the court liquidate Kriminon-Novosibirsk, a rehabilitation center for former prisoners. The prosecutor’s office held that the center operated as an education provider without a proper license. In both cases the prosecutors emphasized the potential dangers of Ron Hubbard’s teachings, central to both organizations’ activities.

We are aware of at least three cases where organizations successfully challenged their closure and resumed their operations. In addition to the above-mentioned Smolensk Methodists and Lipetsk Baptists, they included a Muslim community in Voronezh which had its registration revoked a few years ago.

The Ministry of Justice dropped its claims against the Russian Biblical Society (RBS). A review into the Society’s operation conducted in September failed to find any characteristics of a religious organization or any documentary or factual evidence of religious instruction or indoctrination. The Ministry of Justice admitted it had made a mistake in December.

Discrimination against ‘non-traditional’ religious organizations. Protestants and new religious movements continue to face consistent discrimination. The fact that these faith groups are not mentioned in the Preamble to the Federal Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations is seen by many bureaucrats as an indication of their illegitimacy and a reason to harass them.

Throughout the year, ‘anti-sectarian’ centers and councils were set up in a number of regions with the purpose of protecting the public from the ‘negative influence’ of ‘non-traditional’ religious organizations. Membership of such councils is not limited to psychologists, health professionals, educators, lawyers and priests of ‘traditional’ religions, but also includes law enforcement agents. Such centers have been set up in St. Petersburg, Adygeia and Chuvashia; in the latter two cases these councils operate under the auspices of the local Interior Ministries.

Local and regional authorities support ‘anti-sectarian’ conferences; for example, in Ryazan one such conference was co-sponsored by the city administration and Ryazan State University. The authorities in Ulianovsk region launched a project titled ‘Beware: Sects!’ including seminars and conferences for local teachers. The government of Penza region announced that it would take tougher measures to fight ‘sects’.

The Ministry of Education in Bashkortostan sent out letters to various regional officials and education authorities urging them to educate the

public about the danger of ‘foreign religious organizations of a destructive nature’.

Efforts by certain pro-Kremlin youth groups – whose activities are believed to be officially endorsed – to build a negative image of new religious movements have also been observed. In March, for example, Young Russia (*Rossiia Molodaia*), together with teachers and students of the Bauman Technical University in Moscow, staged a protest against a Scientologist office in their neighborhood. Soon afterwards the management of the Tractor Equipment Plant which had let office space to the Scientologists terminated their lease contract. United Russia’s Young Guard (*Molodaia gvardiia*) in Cheliabinsk has been devising a system to fight new religious movements together with members of ‘traditional’ religions and the police. A practical action undertaken by Young Guard members was the picket against the use of a former kindergarten building by Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Government of Mordovia was forced by the Nashi (‘Ours’) movement to postpone a scheduled conference of Baptists for a few months. Nashi’s Orthodox corps joined the police to break up a Baptist march in Briansk region.

However, the pressure is not limited to ‘anti-sectarian’ propaganda. In February, police and prosecutors in Kirov District of St. Petersburg searched the local branch of the Church of Scientology and confiscated two boxes of records of members’ confessions (auditing sessions).

In August, Baptists faced difficulties organizing a nationwide congress outside Moscow. The Istra District head of administration tried to stop the event by pressuring Mosenergo (Moscow Power Utility) and the management of The Spring (*Rucheek*) recreation facility for children – the congress venue – into denying their services to the congress. The congress was eventually held, even though the power supply to the venue had been cut off. The head of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists, Iurii Sipko, filed a complaint with the Office of the Prosecutor General requesting that the head of Istra District administration be prosecuted under article 148 of the Criminal Code (interference in the freedom of conscience and religion).

Incidents of unreasonable interference in the affairs of non-registered Baptist groups were reported in Norilsk, in Kurgan and Orel regions. The authorities banned their prayer sessions, and a local TV channel in Kurgan region broadcast a report intended to discredit the Baptist community.

In September, the prosecutor’s office in Ufa banned the lease of a horserace track and a sports center to a Jehovah’s Witness congregation.

Local residents in Tomsk region perceived the construction of a Krishna followers’ housekeeping facility as a would-be ashram, and wrote to various

authorities asking them to prevent ‘adepts of a totalitarian sect’ from invading their village. In December, the regional office of Rosselkhozadzor (Agricultural Supervisory Agency) found that the construction was against the law.

Fewer meetings of Falun Dafa (Falun Gong) followers were prevented by police in 2008 than in 2007, but the authorities are still relentless in suppressing this group’s freedom of assembly. Moreover, even though in January Nikulinskii District Court in Moscow found that a Falun Dafa picket was suppressed unlawfully in 2007, police again broke up their pickets in Moscow in January and in April 2008.

Religious minorities are not always overpowered by ‘anti-sectarian’ discrimination however. For example, the Orthodox Eparchy in Murmansk expressed its discontent at the construction of a building for Pentecostals, followed by a letter from a group of local residents to the city administration asking that the construction of a ‘cult building for the neo-Pentecostals sect’ be prohibited. The City Committee for Territorial Planning and Development nevertheless refused to ban the construction.

The Murmansk Eparchy then appealed to the prosecutor’s office with the unusual request to review whether it was legal for the Pentecostals to construct a ‘cult building’ without prior public consultation. In response, the Pentecostals complained to the prosecutor’s office in December about libelous information on their church disseminated by certain Orthodox citizens.⁵ The conflict around the construction continues.

The situation of foreign clergy. The situation of foreign priests deserves a separate mention.

In February, the Russian authorities detained Ukrainian Protestant priest Alexander Dziuba of the Triumphant Zion Church upon his arrival in Sheremetovo-1 Airport and sent him back to Kiev. An officer at the Russian border explained to the priest that his presence on Russian territory was undesirable.

Foreign clergy continued to face entry visa problems. In April, Buddhists in Kalmykia once again asked the Russian Foreign Ministry to issue a visa to the Dalai Lama, but the Ministry refused.

In January, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Russia requested visa assistance from the Russian authorities. According to the Conference Secretary, Father Igor Kovalevskii, as of April the Catholic Church was soliciting residence permits for 200 priests, or 90% of its clergy in Russia.

⁵ And even urged for criminal proceedings under article 282 of the Criminal Code against Chief of the Eparchial Department for Religious Education and Catechesis Anton Tuchkov, apparently an excessive demand.

Other incidents of discrimination and unwarranted interference. Bureaucrats sometimes show personal preferences for certain entities within ‘traditional’ religions over others. In most cases this concerns Muslims.

The local administration in Kemerovo region appointed Takhir Davletkulov to serve as imam in a local mosque, against the will of local Muslims who had elected Pavel Bagomanov to the position. The community using the mosque falls under the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Asian Russia (*Dukhovnoe upravlenie musulman aziatskoi chasti Rossii*, DUMACHR). The regional administration, however, favors the Central Spiritual Directorate of Muslims (*Tsentralnoe dukhovnoe upravlenie musul'man*, TsDUM) where the appointed imam comes from. The community understandably protested against the interference in its religious affairs and appealed to the regional Governor Aman Tuleev (and in January 2009, to V. Putin).

The Mayor of Chebarkul, Cheliabinsk region, demanded that the local Muslims leave the DUMACHR and join the TsDUM instead, in return for legalizing a recently built mosque by assigning it a street address. The mayor eventually agreed to assign a street address to the mosque anyway, even though the Muslim community refused to switch to the TsDUM.

In Dagestan, Islamic arbitral tribunals were banned. The prosecutor’s office prohibited the Chairman of the Mosque Council in the city of Dagestanskii Ogni from setting up such tribunals, and the order applies elsewhere in Dagestan. However, Russian civil law allows private arbitral tribunals, though the relevant practice has not evolved yet.

There have been a few reports of unfounded interference in the ROC’s operation as well. St. Petersburg Governor Valentina Matvienko, while inspecting the sites of renovation projects in the city’s cultural and historical monuments, demanded that the Trinity (*Troitskii*) Cathedral reschedule church services. ‘Worship services must be adjusted to accommodate the renovation work, rather than vice versa’ she said, and threatened to close the church for a few months if it did not comply.

We are aware of only a few episodes of discrimination against individuals based on their religion. In June, Olga Rybakova, director of a recreation camp for youth, was fired for being a Baptist. The Deputy Governor of Magadan region and the Deputy Mayor of Magadan both opposed having a Baptist fill this position.

In April, the Union of Muslim Women of Tatarstan reported increasing denials of employment to women wearing a Muslim headscarf. In many offices, the security staff would not allow any woman wearing a headscarf onto the

premises. The Minister of Labor, Employment and Social Security of Tatarstan Ayrat Shafigullin admitted that this practice was unlawful. A similar incident was reported in a hospital in Makhachkala, where the chief doctor banned a female staff member from wearing a hijab in the workplace.⁶

The situation in the army and the penitentiary system

No legal provisions have been adopted to regulate the presence of religious workers in the army, and no changes have occurred in this sphere since the previous year. At the regional level, uniformed services continued to sign agreements with Orthodox and Muslim organizations.

In May, Deputy Minister of Defense Nikolai Pankov admitted that the Russian army was not yet ready for the position of a cleric in the army units. Whether or not a military unit gives religious workers access to their adherents in the military depends primarily on the attitudes of superior officers and on the activity of religious organizations. In most cases, ROC clergy predominate among religious workers given access to the army. As previously, Protestants and representatives of new religious movements cannot gain access to military units. According to the Chief Office for Educational Work in the Armed Forces, as of April 2008 approximately 2000 Orthodox priests visited army units as volunteers, of them 950 did so consistently over a long period.

We are aware of just one incident of religious conflict in the army. Muslim servicemen of an Air Force unit stationed in Svetlyi, Omsk region, voiced their discontent over being forced to attend Orthodox services and being sprinkled with holy water without their consent.

A proposal made by Deputy Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department of External Church Relations Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin to set up voluntary Orthodox public order detachments to patrol streets had broad public resonance. Opponents of the initiative included human rights advocates, members of other religious denominations, and a number of NGOs. Their concern is that setting up such voluntary law enforcement detachments (albeit unarmed) based on religious affiliation may trigger an outbreak of faith-based conflicts. Many oppose the delegation of law enforcement functions to voluntary groups as unacceptable, particularly given that proponents of Orthodox detachments demand excessive powers for them, such as the right to perform ID checks.

⁶ In principle, the chief doctor could refer to the rules obliging medical workers to wear a uniform; however, a hijab is not essentially inferior to any other medical headdress.

Ministry of the Interior officials did not approve of the proposal, but agreed to give it due consideration. No steps have been taken to implement the initiative. Without an official endorsement, a few Orthodox detachments were set up in Moscow anyway and intermittently patrolled streets. They did not coordinate their activity with the authorities responsible for voluntary public order detachments. We are aware of similar groups in other regions as well.

The situation in the penitentiary system has not changed substantially since the previous year. Prisoners in most penitentiary institutions are allowed to form religious communities, to attend services, to consult with clergy and to possess religious literature. According to the press office of the Federal Penitentiary Service, as of February 2008, a total of 436 religious facilities were established in prisons, including 403 Orthodox churches, three Catholic churches, 23 mosques, and seven Buddhist dugans. These figures do not include the 741 prayer rooms – 517 Orthodox, 87 Muslim, 7 Buddhist and 1 Jewish – available in penal institutions.

However, as in 2007, incidents of discrimination against Muslim prisoners were reported. Several complaints concerning discrimination against Muslims by administrations of prison colonies came from Kemerovo, Murmansk and Omsk regions, and from Kabardino-Balkaria. Prisoners in the colony of Murmashi, Murmansk region, filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights complaining that they suffered ill-treatment and torture for their adherence to Islam. Prisoners Evgenii Timoshin and Viktor Spitsin, both ethnic Russians, were beaten and called ‘Christ-betrayers’ by prison guards for having adopted Islam. Prisoners in Omsk region were subjected to ill-treatment for having performed namaz, and one of them was later found hanged. There have been reports from prisoners who complain about not being allowed to possess Muslim literature, to perform religious rituals or to consult with imams.

Religion and secular education

In 2008, controversy continued over the teaching of the Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture (FOC) in schools. Advocates and opponents of the FOC school course continued their advocacy through open letters, protests, and appeals to the public and to various authorities, even though they were less active than in 2007. Neither party has gained a significant advantage however.

The decision adopted in 2007 to terminate the regional component of school curricula – and the teaching of FOC has usually been a part of the regional component – combined with a lack of noticeable impact of the course, caused the geographic expansion of FOC courses to slow down in 2008. However, even in

2008 optional lessons in FOC were introduced in almost 200 schools in Rostov region, while in Voronezh region the number of classes teaching ‘spiritual and moral disciplines’ more than doubled in the 2007/2008 academic year.

We are not aware of statistics specifically relating to the teaching of FOC. However, the Ministry of Education and Science monitors various courses related to religion and religious culture taught in schools in 79 Russian regions, and its findings suggest that such courses are particularly widespread in the Central and Southern Federal Districts, where they are taught to thousands of students in hundreds of schools. Regions with the largest number of such courses include Kemerovo, Moscow, Voronezh and Smolensk regions and Krasnodar region, where the number of students attending such classes may be as high as ten thousand. Of particular note are Belgorod region (where the FOC was once part of the compulsory curriculum) with more than 140 thousand students taking religious courses, Chechnia (93 thousand) and Ingushetia (34 thousand), where the religious disciplines taught in schools focus on Islam.

In 17 regions the number of students taught religious subjects is between one thousand and ten thousand. Less than one thousand school students are taught religious disciplines in each of the 35 other regions (these are usually taught in a few dozen general schools or in a couple of Orthodox private schools). In 19 regions no disciplines relating to religion or religious culture are taught in schools.

Courses on Orthodox Christianity predominate; according to the 2006/2007 school year data, they were taught to more than 70% of students taking any course relating to religion, mainly in the Central and North Western Federal Districts (but not limited to them). Courses in the history of religion, religion as part of the local culture, and other more or less neutral courses were taught to approximately 30%, mainly in the Urals, Siberia and the Far East. Courses focused on Islam were taught to only about 0.2 % of students (Buddhism and Judaism together – to around 0.1 %). According to recent data available from Chechnia and Ingushetia, the proportion of courses relating to Islam has grown many times since then.

Violations relating to the teaching of religious disciplines appear to be fewer than in previous years. We are aware of several conflicts successfully settled through legal proceedings. Muslims in the village of Zasechnoe, Penza District, successfully challenged the compulsory teaching of FOC in local schools. Pilot courses to test a FOC curriculum were launched there without the consent of parents. Since the regional Ministry of Education found the compulsory course to be a violation, the course was declared optional, but Muslim children were forced to take it anyway. The chairman of the Penza region Muslim Spiritual Authority Abbas Bibarsov complained to the prosecutor’s office, which repealed

the order of the Penza region Chief of Educational Department ‘On launching a pilot project to test the Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture course in general schools’ as inconsistent with Russian law.

In the course of her lecture to future teachers of FOC in April 2008, assistant professor Svetlana Shestakova of the Social Work Department, Institute of Humanities, Tiumen State University of Oil and Gas, made offensive remarks in regard to Roman Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Jews. Since Shestakova is also a member of the Orthodox Eparchy Missionary Department, the Tiumen region Congress of Religious Associations formally asked Patriarch Aleksii II and Archbishop of Tobolsk and Tiumen Dimitrii (Kapalin) to explain whether or not the offensive statements about other religions reflect the ROC’s official position. In August, the Prosecutor’s Office of Tiumen region opened a criminal investigation under article 282 of the Criminal Code (‘incitement to hatred and animosity, as well as denial of human dignity’) into S. Shestakova’s public lecture.

Another incident was reported in Nizhnii Novgorod region, where the Muslim community was offended by an inaccurate description of Islam in a textbook on the History of Religions used in more than 300 of the region’s schools. Believers were offended by certain statements in the textbook and sent letters to various authorities demanding an investigation and a ban on the textbook.

Deputy Representative of the Russian President in Volga Federal District Vladimir Zorin admitted that the textbook ‘*actually contained a number of contradictions and defects relating to the section on Islam*’. The Rector of the regional Institute for the Development of Education met with the chairman of the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims, and they agreed to amend the subsequent, third version of the textbook with due consideration to the Muslim believers’ comments.

The idea of teaching the fundamentals of Christian Orthodoxy as part of ‘Spiritual and Moral Culture’ – a new bloc of subjects proposed by the ROC in 2007 as part of the wider school reform approved by the State Duma – has not yet produced the intended results. The Russian Ministry of Education and Science and the Russian Academy of Education continue their work to draw up new educational standards, consulting not only with the ROC, but also with Muslims, Protestants, and with the Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Associations in Russia. According to Tatiana Petrova, Head of the Department for Educational Policy and Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Science, even though the idea of the ‘Spiritual and Moral Culture’ bloc ‘*was originally proposed by a religious organization, the standard is being written by academics, experts in teaching methods, educators, and teachers. They may have a different perspective*

on the matter’. In fact, the entire educational reform, including the proposed Spiritual and Moral Culture curriculum, appears to be delayed indefinitely, and no substantial developments are to be expected in the near future.

Officials from the Ministry of Education and other authorities have consistently upheld the principle of teaching religious subjects as a voluntary, optional course.

The refusal to include theology in the registry of academic disciplines maintained by the State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles was yet another failed attempt to have religious disciplines integrated into mainstream secular education. The decision not to include theology was taken on 19 December by a meeting of the Ministry of Education and Science Commission for Improving the Nomenclature of Academic Qualifications. Theologians are advised to defend dissertations in Religious Studies.

Religious presence in schools does not necessarily take the form of lessons. An important and alarming incident should be mentioned: on 4 December, Gribovsk District Court in Voronezh region rejected a complaint filed by Protestant priest Aleksei Perov against a local school. He asked the court to recognize that an Orthodox prayer conducted in village school No 3 in September 2007 was against the law, and to award him compensation for moral harm, since his son David was beaten by his classmates for refusing to take part in the prayer. The proceedings lasted for a year and failed to recognize Orthodox prayer in school as an interference with the Perovs’ freedom of religion or their right to raise their child in accordance with their own religious beliefs. Similarly, the court failed to find a violation of the Law on Education or the Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations. Earlier, the prosecutor’s office in Gribovsk District found a violation of the Perovs’ constitutional rights and of the secularity principle in education. The plaintiffs intend to appeal the judgment.

Insufficient protection from defamation and attacks

In 2008, several priests and church staff were killed, but there is no evidence that the killings were motivated by religious hatred. As in 2007, numerous attempted murders and assaults on priests were reported in the North Caucasus, but again, there is no evidence available to us that these attacks were motivated by religious hatred. In fact, faith-based conflicts in the North Caucasus republics may be interpreted as political, as well as criminal or religious, since it is not always possible to differentiate religious opposition from political opposition in the region.

In summer, four teenagers were killed in Yaroslavl and their bodies dismembered. The suspected perpetrators, eight people aged between 17 and 19, described themselves as Satanists, but according to experts, the nature of the crime was 'contrary to the Satanic canon'. The charges brought under pp. 'a' and 'g' of part 2, article 105 of the Criminal Code (murder) do not indicate a ritual killing either.

We have more reason to suspect a religious motive in the attacks against a healer and two fortune-tellers in Dagestan and Ingushetia; two of the three incidents resulted in the victims' deaths.

We should also mention a few cases where, in our opinion, the motive was certainly that of religious hatred. In Nizhnii Novgorod in March, a teenager yelling 'We are patriots, we will kick you out of here', threw a glass bottle at a group of Krishna worshippers, hitting a 42 year old man. Criminal charges were brought under article 213 (hooliganism).

In May, Iulduz Khaknazarova, a Muslim woman, was attacked in the Moscow metro; three attackers yelling racist slogans began by tearing off her Muslim headscarf. The Moscow Prosecutor's Office refused to open a criminal investigation.

In March, a court bailiff entered a Prayer House of Evangelical Christians in Bilibino, Chukotka Autonomous District, yelled 'I'm going to waste you all now!', and opened fire at random from his officially-issued gun. Nobody was hurt. The attacker was drunk.

In April, a prayer house of the Living Word Church was attacked in Kuznetsk, Penza region. A group of teenagers led by a local criminal 'authority' broke into the building during evening prayer and insulted the worshippers, called them 'sectarians' and threatened to kill them and to set fire to the prayer house. The gang leader faced criminal charges under article 213 of the Criminal Code and paid compensation to the believers.

In November, the home of Hieromonk Serapion (Mit'ko), Head of the Missionary Department, Yaroslavl Eparchy, was set on fire. The arson attack was confirmed by the Fire Safety authorities. The perpetrators have not been found at the time of writing. The Missionary Department's most visible activity is opposition to new religious movements. The priest denied having been threatened, but admitted that his Department's activity '*had caused a kind of strong aggressive reaction among totalitarian sects and certain people with liberal views in Yaroslavl*'.

In November, an explosion occurred in the Church of St. Nicholas in Biriulevo, Moscow, injuring two people; the building was not damaged. Investigators suspected that the blast was the work of delinquent youngsters, but did not rule

out the possibility that Satanists may be behind the attack. Criminal charges were brought under article 213 and part 1, article 222 (illegal possession of weapons, ammunition and explosives) of the Criminal Code. However, in January 2009 police arrested a group of radical neo-Nazi neopagans implicated in numerous blasts and other types of attacks. Now members of the group also face charges for the explosion in St. Nicholas Church.

In 2008, a total of 36 incidents of vandalism were committed against houses of worship and churches, somewhat more than in 2007 (27). Vandals committed 16 attacks against Orthodox churches and chapels, seven attacks against synagogues, six attacks each against Muslim and Protestant buildings, and one attack each against a Jehovah's Witness hall and a pagan temple. On numerous occasions perpetrators threw stones and broke windows in the buildings. Certain houses of worship, for example synagogues in Nizhnii Novgorod and Vladivostok and a mosque in Yaroslavl, had been targeted by vandals before. Nationalist stickers were placed on the doors and walls of the mosque in Nizhnii Novgorod.

Arson attacks against houses of worship increased. In January, unidentified attackers threw bottles of flammable liquid at a Muslim house of prayer in Sergiev Posad, in what was the third attack against this place of worship since 2005. A similar incident occurred a month later at a mosque in Vladimir, the tenth attack on this building in three years. In March, attackers set fire to a prayer house of the Full Gospel Church in Kaspiisk (Dagestan). A group of worshippers were inside at the time of the fire; two children were injured. In June, a prayer house of the Full Gospel Church of Jesus Christ was destroyed by an arson attack in Leningrad region, and a synagogue was set on fire in Nizhnii Novgorod region. In August, unidentified arsonists threw a bottle of flammable liquid into the window of the Cathedral of St. George in Kaluga. A Jehovah's Witness hall was destroyed by fire in Chekhov outside Moscow. The victims suspect an arson attack, as they found petrol canister fragments on the scene, but the local police refused to investigate. In October, the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church was set on fire in Novosibirsk. Arson attacks against places of worship were particularly frequent in December. Unidentified attackers threw a bottle of flammable liquid at an Orthodox church in Moscow. An Orthodox church and a parish school were burnt down in Ekaterinburg; according to eyewitnesses, someone had painted nationalist slogans and swastikas on the church fence before it was set on fire. In Ryazan, unidentified arsonists poured flammable liquid and set fire to a wall of the Presentation of Our Lord Church.

In 2008, 42 acts of vandalism in cemeteries were reported in total (as opposed to 34 in 2007), including 32 attacks against Orthodox, six against Jewish,

three against Muslim cemeteries, and one attack against an Armenian cemetery. As in 2007, many vandals were children and teenagers, and in some cases it was not clear whether or not the vandalism was motivated by religious hatred. This motive was clear, however, in all the six known attacks against Jewish graves, in four attacks against Orthodox graves, and in one attack against a Muslim grave. Moreover, on five occasions vandals targeted crosses for public veneration (St. Petersburg, Moscow), a crucifix outside a church (Penza), an information panel at the construction site of an Orthodox church (St. Petersburg), a monument to an Orthodox missionary in Blagoveshchensk, and a cross near a mass grave – also desecrated – of World War II victims (Voronezh region).

The mass media, both federal and regional, continue to publish xenophobic articles. The ‘anti-sectarian campaign’ in the federal mass media relating to the final stage of the ‘Penza recluses’ case faded fast,⁷ but in many regions, according to regional reports received by the Moscow Helsinki Group in 2008, ‘anti-sectarian’ and other xenophobic publications concerning religion occurred rather often, with the most frequent targets being new religious movements and Protestant churches.

In November, an ‘anti-sectarian’ report about the Light of Awakening Evangelical Christian Church in Barnaul appeared on the federal TV channel ‘Rossiia’ as part of a crime show. According to the Slavic Center for Law and Justice, the report ‘*exceeded the traditional allegations of turning people into zombies and brainwashing, and took [the accusations] to a new level*’ – the TV report alleged that the Pentecostals had devised a scheme to cheat people out of their property. The church members filed a libel suit.

Parishioners of St. Raphael Orthodox Church of True Faith were offended by a television report about their church shown on the federal NTV Channel and demanded an apology, but did not press a libel charge.

Senior priest Eduard Grabovenko of the New Testament Pentecostal community in Perm made offensive statements about Muslims during a sermon televised by a local channel in May, triggering protests from the Perm Muftiat and the Orthodox Eparchy.

What religious leaders perceive as offensive – sometimes just a critical remark made in an irreverent tone – may appear exaggerated to an observer. The ROC Eparchy in Pskov, for example, maintains a ‘blacklist’ of newspapers to be denied interviews and access to the Church events because of allegedly negative coverage; these papers include *MK in Pskov* and *Velikye Luki, Pskov Province*

⁷ See for details report *Hate Language and Elections: the Federal and Regional Levels. Based on the monitoring period Autumn-Winter 2007-2008* in this book.

(*Pskovskaia Gubernia*), and *Town News for Pskov Inhabitants (Gorodskaia Gazeta dlia Zhitelei Pskova)*.

In some instances, offended religious and other groups attempted to present the offense as an extremist crime. Here are some high-profile incidents in 2008: following demands by Pentecostals to close the federal ‘2x2’ TV channel for showing offensive cartoons, an ‘anti-extremist’ investigation was opened into one of these cartoons, apparently with support from the Pentecostals and some other religious figures; some Muslim leaders protested against the publication by *Russian Newsweek* of one of the ‘Danish cartoons’ featuring the Prophet Mohammad (falsely claiming that the magazine had reprinted numerous cartoons), causing the magazine to receive an official ‘anti-extremist’ warning. Other complaints filed with prosecutors included those against priest Daniil Sysoev for incitement to hatred against Muslims by describing Islam as a ‘false religion’, and film director Ivan Dykhovichnyi for incitement to social and religious hatred by calling an Orthodox priest a fool for blessing a bomber aircraft.

A separate report looks at the problem of abuse in regard to efforts to counter extremism and describes these cases in detail. We regret that religious leaders – even though many have experienced or witnessed religious discrimination firsthand – rely on repressive anti-extremist legislation and encourage its arbitrary enforcement.

The above-mentioned conflicts involving members of major religious organizations should not be interpreted as indicating that interfaith relations in general are worsening. Even though certain militant priests and lay people engage in interfaith conflicts, the top leaders of their religious organizations pursue a policy of ‘peaceful coexistence’ meaning, in particular, that they do not emphasize missionary work among followers of other religions (or other denominations of Christianity). A positive example of practical, rather than merely declarative, openness to the beliefs of others has been the introduction of a Fundamentals of Islam course in an Orthodox seminary in Kazan.

Translated by I. Savelieva.

Alexander Verkhovsky, Galina Kozhevnikova

Inappropriate Enforcement of Anti-extremist Legislation in Russia in 2008

This report does not provide a comprehensive list of cases involving inappropriate anti-extremist enforcement; details of such cases are available from the SOVA Center website at <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/89CCE27>. This paper is an attempt to analyze the main trends in this sphere. This report, therefore, is structured around the main types of inappropriate anti-extremism prevalent in 2008.¹

Summary

The events reported in 2008 were consistent with the trends of abusive anti-extremist enforcement documented earlier.² Almost all related legislative proposals, instead of providing clarity in terms of the specific extremist offenses to be prosecuted, would have only toughened the repressive measures; all but one proposal were rejected. New items continue to be added to the federal list of extremist materials, but the quality of the list is so poor as to make it unusable. Two types of civil liberty were particularly affected by the misuse of anti-extremism legislation in 2008 – namely, freedom of conscience and freedom of expression (in connection with criticism of law enforcement agencies).

Some repressive practices did not expand any further, contrary to many experts' concerns. Practices such as the large-scale confiscation of campaign materials, the removal from elections of candidates opposing the 'ruling party', the issuing of warnings and the persecution of activists for criticism of the authorities continued, but on a smaller scale than in 2007. In particular, pre-election pressure

¹ Note that here, as in our other reports, the SOVA Center does not analyze the situation in the North Caucasus, except in cases directly relevant to the freedom of expression in terms of general law enforcement practices. Other practices of unlawful enforcement of anti-extremist legislation in the North Caucasus are monitored and analyzed by the Memorial Center, the Caucasus Knot (*Kavkazskii Uzel*) website, and by international human rights organizations consistently working in the region.

² Alexander Verkhovsky, 'Anti-Extremist Legislation, its Use and Misuse', in *Xenophobia, Freedom of Conscience and Anti-Extremism in Russia in 2007* (Moscow: SOVA Center, 2008), pp. 45–79.

against the opposition decreased due to the fact that the federal elections in Russia were over by March 2008. No criminal convictions in 2008 relied on the new aggravating circumstances of political and ideological hatred introduced in 2007.

It would be wrong to assume that anti-extremist pressure is inescapable. The case against liberal political writer Andrei Piontkovskii – whose books were challenged in court as being extremist – was closed and charges dropped in 2008. The inappropriate judgment ordering the liquidation of the newspaper *Duel* was quashed (however, proceedings were eventually resumed on new and appropriate grounds). The ethnic Mari pagan priest Vitalii Tanakov continues his court battle, while the proceedings to determine whether his book *A Priest Speaks (Zhrets gororit)* should be banned as extremist increasingly resemble a parody of a trial. However, few people have successfully challenged inappropriate prosecution, and we do not know of any charges brought against those responsible for such pressure (and we assume no officials have been held accountable).

New legislative proposals

Most new bills designed to amend (i.e. to toughen) the anti-extremist legislation were rejected in 2008.

Following a negative comment by the federal government in October, the Kursk regional Duma withdrew the bill (introduced in June 2008) which would have facilitated the liquidation of legal entities after an anti-extremist warning by removing the 12 months' period of grace currently allowed for the correction of violations.

Similarly, the government's negative opinion expressed in August 2008 resulted in the rejection of a proposal by Bashkortostan legislature. This would have allowed internet providers only 30 days in which to block access to websites featuring blacklisted extremist publications; the government argued that the requirement was technically unfeasible.

The most comprehensive amendment of anti-extremist legislation was initiated by the Office of the Prosecutor General and launched in the State Duma by United Russia (*Edinaia Rossiia*) and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (*Liberal'no-Demokraticheskaiia Partiiia Rossii*, LDPR). The bill on Amending Certain Laws to Improve Counteraction to Extremism would amend the laws on Mass Media, on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations, on Combating Extremist Activity, and the Code of Administrative Offenses. Even though the bill was withdrawn from the State Duma the following day, it is consistent with the general approach adopted by the Office of the Prosecutor General since 2007, so we assume that this initiative will reemerge and it therefore merits a detailed review.

It was unclear to us how the obligatory retraction of untrue information in the media would contribute to the fight against extremism. Apparently, it was also unclear to the Duma members proposing the bill, since they failed to offer any clues in the explanatory note attached to the bill.

Amendments to the Law on the Freedom of Conscience were intended to suppress potential links between religious and political activity (reflecting concerns over faith-related terrorism), as well as ‘undesirable’ religious practices as such (reflecting concerns over ‘totalitarian sects’). The amendments required that religious groups applying for registration should disclose *‘the fundamentals of their teaching and practices, such as the history of the religion and the group in question, the forms and methods of their operation, their attitude towards the family and marriage, education, any specific ideas concerning the health of their believers, any restrictions of civil rights and obligations imposed on members and clergy.’* Technically, groups which are not formally registered are required to provide similar information for expert review to determine whether or not they qualify as religious organizations; the proposed amendment, therefore, would only provide additional grounds for denial of registration.

However, a new requirement that religious organizations should inform the registering authority of all curricula of their educational establishments and any amendments to such curricula would be very difficult to comply with (even for those organizations which have not been suspected of ‘extremism’ so far, such as the Russian Orthodox Church). These potentially repressive proposals were clearly in line with other ‘anti-extremist’ attempts to limit freedom of conscience (see below).

Also potentially repressive was a proposal to amend article 20.29 of the Code of Administrative Offenses which punishes the mass dissemination of literature blacklisted as extremist; the bill would delete the word ‘mass’ to make any exchange of banned materials punishable.

Amendments to the Federal Law on Combating Extremist Activity, besides merely technical matters,³ included the above-mentioned proposal of Bashkortostan legislators to set a deadline for internet providers ordered to block offending resources, even though the Bashkortostan-sponsored bill had been rejected by both the government and the Duma two months earlier.

In sum, the proposal included excessively tough measures deemed unacceptable by those decision-makers who initiated its immediate withdrawal.

³ These included reasonable proposals to establish a procedure for publishing and updating the official blacklists of extremist materials and organizations, to require the publication of names of mass media outlets and legal entities formally warned against extremism, etc.

On 12 December 2008, the government proposed a potentially repressive bill related to anti-extremism and expanding the concepts of high treason and espionage. Specifically, it mentioned the term ‘state security’ – which has no definition in Russian law – and contained a list of ‘hostile actors’ which even included international organizations without any reservations.⁴ Then on 27 January 2009 the draft was withdrawn to be finalized and improved.

And finally, the only substantive bill with implications for anti-extremism adopted in 2008 was the one which limited the competence of jury courts.⁵ Launched in the State Duma on 2 December, it was promptly adopted on 12 December and signed into law by the President on 30 December. Under the new law, jury trials are not available for cases under article 205 (terrorist act), 206 parts 2–4 (hostage taking), 208 part 1 (organization of an illegal armed formation), 212 part 1 (organization of riots), 275 (high treason), 276 (espionage), 278 (the seizure or retention of power by force), 279 (armed riot), and 281 (subversion).

We are strongly opposed to any restriction of jury trials. Moreover, trials on the above charges are often closed to the public, and the removal of jurors may lead to an increase in the number of unfair judgments.

Some experts are concerned by the September 2008 reorganization of the Ministry of the Interior; they argue that the establishment of a special police force – a separate department in the Ministry of the Interior and dedicated centers in its regional branches – for combating extremism may contribute to abusive anti-extremist practices. However, we do not see how reorganization per se may lead to such consequences.⁶

Attempts to limit the freedom of conscience

A particularly visible trend in 2008 can be described as inappropriate pressure on groups and individuals accused of inciting religious hatred. While previously such pressure was limited to Muslim groups in opposition to officially-recognized muftiats, in 2008 the situation changed drastically. Anti-extremist measures now target mainstream Muslims and members of other faiths, includ-

⁴ The fact that prosecutors find it difficult to prove the ‘hostility’ of certain activities was given as a reason for the need to introduce a detailed description of ‘hostile’ activity to the Criminal Code.

⁵ In May 2008, another law was adopted to establish the functions of the Federal Registration Service (*Rosregistration*, henceforth FRS). It was strictly technical and became obsolete a week after its adoption. See details in the report *Radical Nationalism in Russia in 2008, and Efforts to Counteract It* in this book.

⁶ See details Op. cit.

ing Orthodox Christians. Anti-extremist legislation is being used as a weapon in disputes between secular and religious groups and between different religious groups. Increasingly, believers themselves initiate inappropriate pressure under the guise of anti-extremism.

The excessively broad legal definition of extremism makes it possible to interpret any strong criticism of someone's religious (or antireligious) opinions as 'incitement to religious hatred'.

Persecution of Muslims

Muslim groups in opposition to officially-recognized muftiats continue to be targeted by controversial anti-extremist enforcement.

According to the Civic Assistance Committee, at least 15 Hizb ut-Tahrir activists were convicted in Russia in 2008 – in Chelyabinsk (four people) and in Bashkortostan (11 people in three trials). The sentences varied between probation and short prison terms. All verdicts relied on article 282² of the Criminal Code, which means that the only charge brought or proven against them was their membership of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Some of the defendants had been tortured.

According to FSB Director Alexander Bortnikov, a total of 23 Hizb ut-Tahrir leaders and functionaries were tried and convicted in various Russian regions in 2008;⁷ five activists of the Islamic Party of Turkestan were arrested and extradited. Furthermore, between late 2007 and early 2008 three members of Tablighi Jamaat – a non-violent movement known for its radical teaching of 'pure Islam' – were tried and sentenced to short prison terms in Bashkortostan. Notably, most investigations against radical Muslim groups outside the North Caucasus have been reported from Volga Federal District.

Thus, the practice of criminal prosecution for membership in radical Islamic groups – even in the absence of evidence that such groups are dangerous⁸ or that specific defendants have been involved in criminal acts – persists in Russia. We have no evidence to insist that any specific sentence was unfair. The observed pattern, however, causes concern, since it suggests persecution for beliefs.

In 2008, the Russian authorities continued to extradite (or to attempt to extradite) individuals wanted by authorities in their home countries (in most

⁷ Besides PFD and Chelyabinsk region, the FSB officials mentioned Kurgan region and the Republic of Udmurtia, but we could not uncover any details of the trials held there in 2008.

⁸ This relates to Hizb ut-Tahrir and Tablighi Jamaat, but not the Islamic Party of Turkestan.

cases Uzbekistan) for involvement with radical Muslim groups. Russian courts do not consider any charges against such people on their merits. The main argument against extradition is that these individuals face torture in their home countries. By appealing to the European Court of Human Rights, the Civic Assistance Committee was able to stop all but one such extradition (the Said Baiburin case, see below) in 2008. However, the reported cases may be a small fraction of the actual number of extraditions.

The fact that Russia violates (or attempts to violate) its international obligation to refrain from extraditing individuals to countries where they may face torture is linked to the broad legal definition of extremism and the agreements under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).⁹

Certain Muslim groups were added to the official list of extremist and terrorist organizations in 2008. On 13 November, the Russian Supreme Court found the al-Qaeda organization in the Islamic Maghreb a terrorist group and banned its activity in Russia, and on 10 April the Supreme Court banned the religious organization Nurdjular for extremism.

While the former judgment does not raise any doubts (except that the organization does not appear to be active in Russia anyway),¹⁰ the Nurdjular case is different.

It is questionable whether such an organization – banned at the request of the Prosecutor General – actually exists in Russia. So far, the name *Nurdjular* has been used to refer to the organization of Said Nursi's (or his disciple Fathulla Gulen's) followers in Turkey and to their real or assumed representatives in Russia. The latter have never engaged in any visible organized activity; to the best of our knowledge, no charges have been brought yet in the criminal investigation against Nurdjular ongoing in Naberezhnye Chelny since 2005. We are certain, however, that the Russian followers of Nursi will face sanctions anyway. We do not know on what grounds the organization was banned, but we assume that the ban is based upon the judgment which found the Russian translations of Nursi's books to be extremist; an application challenging this judgment is pending before the European Court of Human Rights. We know of no evidence to suggest that

⁹ See details of this important legal aspect of the problem in: Elena Riabinina, 'Soglasheniia Shankhaiskoi Organizatsii Sotrudnichestva, kak "pravovaia" osnova dlia ekstraditsii politicheskikh bezhentssev', in *Prava cheloveka v Rossii*, 2 September 2008 (<http://hro1.org/node/2933>).

¹⁰ We should remember, however, that al-Qaeda in its entirety was banned in Russia in 2003. See the most complete, updated list of banned organizations in: 'Spisok organizatsii, priznannykh rossiiskimi sudami ekstremistskimi', *Natsionalizm i ksenofobiia*, SOVA Center website, (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/4DF39C9/A12DD8E>).

Nursi's followers in Russia have ever been involved in violent acts motivated by their beliefs, or in hate propaganda.

Notably, the Supreme Court ruling, with its potentially serious consequences for many of Nursi's followers who may now be considered members of a banned organization, has not yet been published (like the landmark judgment of 2003 banning 15 organizations as terrorist groups). This uncertainty creates a situation where one cannot challenge the judgment or even get a copy of it without showing one's personal interest in the case – and by disclosing such interest one may face criminal charges.¹¹

The Tatar-Turkish schools in Tatarstan have already come under pressure since they are perceived as being influenced by Nursi's followers. The ban on Nurdjular will further undermine the position of such schools.

Even mainstream Muslim groups are targeted by unfair anti-extremist enforcement.

Of particular concern is the apparent tendency to involve the government with its anti-extremist policies in essentially theological disputes within Islam.

For example, numerous people have faced criminal charges for their outspoken support of Wahhabism. Formally, these charges have relied upon the (controversial) legal ban against *The Fundamentals of Tawheed* (*Kniga edinobozhiia* in Russian), an eighteenth century theological treatise written by the founder of Wahhabism. Promotion of Wahhabism was among the charges brought against imam Said Baiburin who was tried and convicted by the Ordzhonikidze District Court in Ufa on 16 April 2008 for public calls to extremist activity (part 1, article 280 of the Criminal Code) and sentenced to 18 months in a general regime prison.¹² In our opinion, the evidence of his guilt presented in the courtroom was insufficient. But even more importantly, central to his conviction was Baiburin's support of Wahhabism and dissemination of *The Fundamentals of Tawheed*. Whether or not he disseminated the books should not have mattered for the criminal proceedings, since this is an offence under the Code of Administrative Offenses rather than the Criminal Code. The expert witnesses of the prosecution alleged that Baiburin had incited hatred against certain groups, but failed to provide any evidence – even

¹¹ This happened a few years ago to a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir who was charged with a criminal offense and sentenced upon requesting a copy of the Supreme Court ruling which banned Hizb ut-Tahrir.

¹² S. Baiburin, imam of a mosque in Ufa, was arrested in Ufa in May 2007, initially for alleged possession of explosives and drug dealing (both explosives and drugs had clearly been planted in his car shortly before the arrest). Later, he was charged under article 280, while the former charges were dropped.

quotations – to support their allegations, and only one of the prosecution witnesses confirmed that the imam had encouraged violence against opponents of Wahhabism. The sentence was appealed; the appeal hearings began on 30 May 2008 and, to the best of our knowledge, they are ongoing; however, in November Baiburin was extradited to Kazakhstan immediately following his release from prison.

Even more dramatic is the ongoing case of *Islam as It Is* (*Islam kak on est'*) website associated with a mosque in Samara and now facing closure under charges of extremism for having once published (just as several other websites did) an article suggesting that Muslims should not celebrate Nowruz. The court addressed this purely theological issue with administrative sanctions, finding in March 2008 that the entire website constituted extremist material. The defendants successfully appealed, and the decision was finally revoked on 14 April 2009. Nevertheless, access to the website remains blocked, amidst misleading statements by the regional FSB office alleging that the website has been closed following an effective judgment.

Persecution of other religious groups

Following a series of failed attempts to liquidate religious organizations on formal grounds,¹³ in 2008 we observed a pattern of anti-extremist persecution targeting certain faith groups depicted by the mass media as 'sects'.

Jehovah's Witnesses were targeted in particular. In May 2008 in Sverdlovsk region they faced an anti-extremist warning, which they challenged in court but lost (and eventually won in March 2009). In the same region in June, criminal charges were brought under article 282 of the Criminal Code, and the prosecutor's office asked the court to find evidence of extremism in the group's magazines – *Watchtower*, *Awake!*, and *Draw Close to Jehovah*. On that occasion the court rejected the suit, but in March 2009 the prosecutor's office made another attempt. In July, proceedings to liquidate a Jehovah's Witnesses community began in Taganrog, relying on two unchallenged anti-extremist warnings issued in late 2007.

Increasingly, arbitrary administrative rulings against 'alien religions' are presented as 'efforts to fight extremism'. For example, anti-extremist warnings were issued to a few property owners for intending to allow Jehovah's Witnesses to hold prayers on their premises. The prosecutor's office of Bashkortostan offered the following reasoning: '*The non-traditional for Russia teaching of Jehovah's Wit-*

¹³ To remind the reader, in 2006–2007 the ECHR delivered judgments against Russia concerning the following groups: the Salvation Army, the Church of Scientology, and the Christ's Grace Church of Evangelical Christians.

nesses was founded in the late 70s in the US, and according to traditional Christian believers, it is a sect.¹⁴

Jehovah's Witnesses were not the only target of anti-extremist pressure. Baptists in Moscow received a warning about alleged extremist activity – a faith community which has never been considered a threat to public security before.

The case of Penza recluses and their leader Petr Kuznetsov also ended in anti-extremist prosecution.¹⁵

On 30 April 2008, the Bekovo District Court in Penza region banned five books by Petr Kuznetsov for extremism. The prosecution experts found that the books contained '*overt and covert propaganda of religious, ethnic hatred, overt and covert propaganda of violence*'. Moreover, the prosecutors claimed that the content of the books in question '*may elicit negative emotions, affect one's mental state, trigger various behavioral reactions, and in special circumstances may provoke aggressive, agitated, and immoral conduct.*' Not having read the books, we cannot judge whether the finding of extremism was appropriate, but the prosecutorial statement raises doubts, since the wording about 'covert propaganda' and potential effects on one's mental state, behavior and morals appears too vague and remote from the legal definition of extremism, particularly since we are dealing with a religious text.

Petr Kuznetsov was convicted a few months later under article 282 of the Criminal Code and referred for compulsory psychiatric treatment.

Mainstream Orthodox groups have not escaped anti-extremist pressure. In October 2008, the local FSB Office in Samara region attempted to prosecute Iurii Maksimov, owner of the *Orthodoxy and Islam* website, under article 282¹ of the Criminal Code; they forwarded the case file to Moscow (the website's official location), but the Moscow authorities refused to prosecute.¹⁶ The website is devoted to theological polemics with Islam from an Orthodox Christian

¹⁴ 'Provedena proverka sobliudeniia zakonodatel'stva o federal'noi bezopasnosti i protivodeistvii ekstremizmu', available on the official website of the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bashkortostan, 25 August 2008, (<http://www.bashprok.ru/news/4032.html>).

¹⁵ To remind the reader, in the autumn of 2007, a group of Orthodox Christian believers voluntarily barricaded themselves in a cave awaiting the end of the world. In April 2008, the threat of the cave's collapse made them come out. Two women died during the voluntary confinement.

¹⁶ In May, the prosecutor's office in Moscow denied some Muslim activists their request to open a criminal investigation under article 282 of the Criminal Code against Orthodox priest Daniil Sysoev who engaged in active proselytism among Muslims and was strongly critical of Islam.

perspective. The FSB Office in Samara was concerned about a text entitled *Muhammad's False Piety (Mnimoe blagochestie Mukhammeda)*, written by Orthodox Christian missionary Aleksandr Miropolskii at the turn of the twentieth century. Even though investigators in Moscow failed to find any problems with the publication, the owner temporarily blocked access to the website, while the FSB Office in Samara region misleadingly announced that the website was 'suppressed following a duly adopted judgment'.

At the end of 2008, it was reported that the authorities in Krasnodar region banned four texts by Falun Gong on finding them extremist; these included: the Russian translation of a treatise about Falun Gong beliefs and practices; two newsletters, and the Russian translation of a report by Canadian human rights investigators about organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners in China. The ban relied on an expert opinion stating that the materials in question '*contained statements eliciting animosity and hatred against people who do not belong to this religious association, proclaiming the exclusivity and superiority of Falun Gong followers and the inferiority of all other people based on the fact that they do not belong to the said religious association, and statements inciting hostile actions against the official government of China,*' and on a psychologist's opinion that '*citizens without specialist knowledge of religion, history, culture and art, may perceive the symbols and attributes used in their book and information leaflets as similar to Nazi symbols and attributes (without prior acquaintance with the text and its meaning).*'

We find that neither a statement of the superiority of one's own religion, nor hostile pronouncements against the Chinese authorities, nor even the possibility that an ignorant reader – 'without prior acquaintance with the text' – might misinterpret the traditional solar symbols used by Falun Dafa, warrant black-listing the said materials for extremism. Besides, repressive practices against Muslim groups reveal that the banning of texts may lead to further persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in Russia.

Prosecution for 'offending the religious sentiments of believers'

Alongside unfairly persecuted members of religious groups, non-religious organizations and activists come under pressure for more or less explicit criticism of religious beliefs.

In May 2008, co-organizers of the Banned Art 2006 exhibition – prominent human rights defender Iurii Samodurov and equally prominent art critic Andrei Erofeev – faced charges for incitement to religious and ethnic

hatred.¹⁷ It is clear from the charges that both are accused of blasphemy against Christian symbols. Their trial began in the summer of 2008; in autumn the proceedings were suspended due to Erofeev's illness, and were resumed in February 2009.

Yet more scandalous was an attempt to close the 2x2 TV channel which broadcasts animated films, mostly for adults. The channel has been criticized on numerous occasions by various religious organizations for 'immoral' content, and we do not question the right of religious leaders to voice such criticism. However, 'anti-extremist' attacks against the channel launched in March 2008 were quite effective, and dangerous for both freedom of expression and freedom of conscience. As the TV channel was applying to renew its broadcasting license, members of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians (Pentecostals – *Rossiiskii ob'edinennyi soiuz khristian very evangel'skoi, ROSHVE*), complained that '*by broadcasting animated cartoons around the clock, the TV channel massively bombards the minds of children with an ideology of immorality and vice, ruthlessness and cruelty; they propagate homosexuality, religious hatred and intolerance.*' Soon the Pentecostals were joined in their protests by members of Jewish and Muslim religious organizations, and some Orthodox Christian activists (but not by Russian Orthodox Church officials). By September, ROSHVE and some other religious figures formally appealed to the Investigation Committee of the Prosecutor General's Office urging them to close the 2x2 TV Channel and to open a criminal investigation against the broadcasters, in particular for the showing of South Park episodes. Shortly afterwards, Liudmila Stebenkova, member of the Moscow City Duma, demanded that the Prosecutor General revoke the channel's broadcasting license for screening yet another animation – Popetown – wherein the Duma member perceived 'extremism' and 'religious hatred'.

On 8 September 2008, the Basmannyi prosecutor's office in Moscow warned the channel against televising a Cartoon Wars episode of South Park; the absurdity of the warning was emphasized by the fact that the episode, in a humorous manner, addresses political correctness towards religion – specifically, whether it is acceptable to portray the prophet Muhammad in a cartoon – and the cartoon characters' behavior is quite appropriate and politically correct. The

¹⁷ To remind the reader, the museum hosted an exhibition of art objects which had been censored out of other art displays in 2006. Orthodox activists deemed the exhibition to be 'an anti-Christian provocation', as some of the exhibits on display contained distorted images of sacred objects. See details of the initial stage of prosecution in: Alexander Verkhovsky, Olga Sibireva, 'Restrictions and Challenges in 2007 on Freedom of Conscience in Russia' in *Xenophobia, Freedom of Conscience and Anti-Extremism in Russia in 2007* (Moscow: SOVA Center, 2008), p. 101.

TV channel challenged the warning in court; no proceedings have taken place yet, but since the channel's broadcasting license was renewed on 16 October, the campaign against them has dwindled.

Many demands to prosecute people for 'offending religious sentiments' are simply ridiculous; for example, a group of Orthodox Christians found incitement to hatred in a comment made by TV producer Ivan Dykhovichnyi: he said 'How dumb all those priests are!' about Orthodox priests blessing bomber aircraft.

Nevertheless, such complaints persist and multiply, wasting law enforcement resources and creating problems for individuals and organizations whose intentions are totally free from religious hatred. For example, a group of believers insisted on the criminal prosecution of Natalia Ishchenko, website editor of the *New Business (Novoe Delo)* paper in Nizhnii Novgorod, for her article 'Christ's Beloved', published under the pen name Natalia Volgina on 4 January 2008 – shortly before Orthodox Christmas – and containing a popular account of a few religious, historical and artistic sources mentioning Mary Magdalene, from the canonical Bible and apocryphal Gospels to Dan Brown. An investigation was launched in response to the believers' complaint, involving experts in linguistics and religion.

Persecution for criticism of law enforcement authorities

The most notable anti-extremist attacks against freedom of expression, affecting private individuals and groups as well as the mass media, occur in response to criticism of the law enforcement agencies.

This abusive practice assumes particularly dangerous forms whenever uniformed forces or top officials in the North Caucasus are criticized.¹⁸ Such 'anti-extremist' harassment usually targets people who criticize police or bureaucrats for practices which are likely to provoke, rather than mitigate extremist and terrorist activity. The bureaucrats then bring charges against the critics for 'libelous allegations of extremist activity' – which is an extremist crime per se under the current version of the law. Usually, they do not sue their critics for libel under the defamation law, but even if they do, the 'anti-extremist' prosecution often precedes a judicial finding of libel (we described this practice in our previous report).

¹⁸ It should be noted that persecution is not limited to mass media based in the North Caucasus; in October, *Arsen'evskie Vesti* paper in the Far East received a warning following publication of an appeal by members of the Ingush opposition.

Persecution of mass media

The case of *Ingushetiya.Ru* was the most dramatic story of the persecution of a mass media outlet in 2008. The first attempt to close the website – which opposed the then political leadership of the republic – was made in March 2008; the prosecutor’s office of Ingushetia asked the Russian Supreme Court to close the website on the grounds that a criminal investigation under article 282 of the Criminal Code had been opened into one of the website’s publications. But the Russian Supreme Court refused to prosecute.

In another attack against the website, on 3 April the Nazran Court found evidence of extremism in an interview with prominent Ingush opposition leader Musa Keligov – even though *Ingushetiya.Ru* had reprinted the interview from *News Time (Vremia Novostei)*¹⁹ and the latter had experienced no problems as a result of this publication. On 10 April, the same court found evidence of extremism in some other materials published on the website (we do not know exactly which materials).

There was clearly nothing illegal in Keligov’s interview; it should be acknowledged, however, that certain publications on *Ingushetiya.Ru* did contain xenophobic statements, particularly against Ossetians,²⁰ so we do not rule out the possibility that the judgment of 10 April may have been well-founded.

In May, Kuntsevo Court in Moscow opened proceedings against the website based on the two judgments delivered in April. The website editors were accused of incitement against the authorities and xenophobia.²¹ The former charge at least was ill-founded: the website had never incited anyone to riots or violence. Its authors’ strong opposition to President Zyazikov and their efforts to organize mass protests were not the same as extremist activity, even if individual participants of such protests may have done something illegal.²²

On 6 June 2008, Kuntsevskii Court in Moscow ordered the closure of *Ingushetiya.Ru*, and the judgment came into force after an unsuccessful appeal

¹⁹ ‘Poriadok v respublike dolzhny navodit’ sami ingushi’, *Vremia Novostei*, 11 February 2008. The text is still accessible via the paper’s website (<http://www.Vremia.ru/2008/20/4/197273.html>).

²⁰ Aleksei Batayev, ‘Etnicheskaia ksenofobiia v internete: sluchai saita INGUSHETIYA.RU’, *Charta Caucasica*, 2 April 2008 (<http://caucasica.org/analytics/detail.php?ID=1227>).

²¹ Xenophobia is also mentioned in the above criminal case under article 282. It is arguable whether the editors’ xenophobic remarks are serious enough to warrant closure of the website, let alone bring criminal charges against anyone. Perhaps this issue should be addressed with regard to the overall climate of ethnic intolerance in the region,

²² See details of these events in Ingushetia in: “‘Oni kak budto upali s neba!’ Kontrterrorizm, narusheniia prava cheloveka i beznakazannost’ v Ingushetii”, a report by Human Rights Watch, June 2008, pp. 87–103.

in Moscow City Court on 12 August. Moreover, even the domain name was confiscated for the first time that we know of in anti-extremist jurisprudence.

Since Magomed Evloev, the website owner, was killed by Ingush police in Nazran on 31 August, pressure against the website has subsided; on 4 September the judgment finding Keligov’s interview extremist was quashed, the website was reopened as *Ingushetia.Org*, and, to the best of our knowledge, has been left alone.

Two papers in Dagestan, *Rough draft (Chernovik)* and *Action Time (Vremia Deistvii)*, came under massive pressure in 2008.

In September, two articles in *Action Time* criticizing police and FSB practices in Dagestan first came under scrutiny. In December, the Federal Service for the Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Communications (*Rossviaz’komnadzor*) confirmed (wrongly, in our opinion) that the articles contained ‘evidence of incitement to extremist activity and interethnic hatred’. Further proceedings appear to have been suspended after the reviewing experts declared that they had not drawn any categorically negative conclusions about the articles.

The editors of *Rough draft* received an ‘anti-extremist’ warning in July, and in August editor-in-chief Nadira Isaeva faced criminal charges under part 2, article 280 and part 1, article 282 of the Criminal Code. While the reason for prosecution appears to be their criticism of police brutality in dealing with the Islamic underground, formally the charges referred to the fact that they had quoted a leader of rebel fighters, alongside other testimonies, to illustrate the problems of terrorism and anti-terrorism in the region. (The investigation was completed in February 2009, and formal charges were finally brought under part 2, article 282 against Isaeva and part 1, article 282 against four reporters. They were charged with incitement of animosity ‘between members of Russia’s main ethnos and ethnicities of the Caucasus,’ and hatred against law enforcement officers.)

Persecution of private individuals and organizations

Similarly, private individuals and organizations often come under pressure for criticism of the law enforcement and other authorities.

In 2008, Savva Terent’ev, a blogger from Syktyvkar, was sentenced to one year’s probation for having posted an aggressive comment about the police on a private blog discussing police abuse in 2007. In his case, the court established that the police are a distinct social group. We have argued on many occasions against this interpretation, as the status of ‘social group’ entitles them to special

protection under criminal law. Moreover, Terent'ev's single comment presented no public danger, because his audience was originally very limited (that is, until his high-profile prosecution and trial).

Since then, the authorities have continued to persecute people for postings on their blogs. As opposed to the Terent'ev case where political motives were not apparent, the criminal prosecution of Dmitrii Solov'ev – an activist of the opposition movement Defence (*Oborona*) – for a few critical comments about police and security agents was clearly political.

Proceedings against two North Caucasus NGOs continued beyond 2008: the Council of Balkar Elders is being persecuted for their criticism of Kabardino-Balkarian President Arsen Kanokov, in particular of his anti-terrorist practices, and the Voice of Beslan (*Golos Beslana*) is under pressure for the publication of an open letter in 2005 denouncing the federal authorities for indirectly aiding the terrorists by inaction and inadequate investigation of the Beslan tragedy.²³

The trial of the Voice of Beslan began on 21 March 2008, but came to a standstill because the organization had split by the time of the trial and the new leaders had not been formally involved in the alleged offense. The plaintiffs' prospects in this case are not particularly bright: an independent linguistic review requested by the North Ossetia law enforcement authorities failed to find any evidence of extremism in the text.

Similarly, the Council of Elders case is currently stalled: in March 2008, the Federal Supreme Court quashed the order of the Kabardino-Balkaria Court to liquidate the group, and sent the case back to be reconsidered. A new trial began on 12 May; no judgment has been passed yet. The group, however, is suspended from operation and it is at the moment the only NGO on the Ministry of Justice's 'List of nongovernmental and religious organizations suspended for extremist activity.'²⁴ By law, an organization may be suspended for a maximum of six months. We are not sure whether their suspension has been formally extended by the courts or whether they have not been taken off the list due to a technical error.

Persecution for quotations

Pressure against mass media outlets for quoting certain people in their reports began in 2007 and increased in 2008.

²³ See details in A. Verkhovsky, *Op. cit.*, pp. 66–67.

²⁴ *Perechen' obshchestvennykh i religioznykh obedinenii, deiatel'nost' kotorykh priostanovlena v svyazi s osushchestvleniem imi ekstremistskoi deiatel'nosti*, available on the Ministry of Justice website (<http://www.minjust.ru/ru/activity/nko/perechen2>).

The most unusual case was a warning issued by Rossviaz'komnadzor to the newspaper *Novaia Gazeta v Peterburge* just a few hours (!) after the publication of an article entitled 'Summer Camps for Genatsvale' expressing indignation at the intention of the Movement against Illegal Immigration (DPNI) to conduct raids to expose Georgians living in Russia. The article quoted a DPNI activist, and the paper was warned against quoting the xenophobic statement. Ironically, the law enforcement authorities ignored the DPNI's xenophobic actions.

This example is one of many,²⁵ where vaguely written policies combined with a large-scale anti-extremist campaign hinder the discussion of xenophobia and discrimination in the mass media.

The newspaper editors challenged the warning in a commercial court [court of arbitration], but the case was referred to a general jurisdiction court, even though most warnings issued to mass media go before the commercial courts. By the time the paper was referred to another court, they had missed the deadline for appeal and found themselves in a legal impasse. The newspaper editors challenged the denial of jurisdiction in a higher commercial court and won the appeal on 16 March 2009, so a commercial court still has to review the legitimacy of the warning.

The above-mentioned *Rough draft* newspaper in Dagestan is now being persecuted for quoting a rebel leader, and *Russian Newsweek* has been warned for reprinting one of the Danish Muhammad cartoons to illustrate a story of past events.

The expansion of anti-extremist enforcement

It is hardly possible to determine the total number of cases of inappropriate anti-extremist enforcement. The statistics of relevant government departments, particularly the prosecutors' offices, are non-transparent. However, we can say by looking at indirect evidence that the practice is expanding, at least in some areas.

For example, large-scale confiscations of promotional materials shortly before the events they are printed for, on the pretext of checking them for extremism, persists and affects both left-wing (*Za Rabochuiu Vlast!*, *Marksistskaia Gazeta*, and *Chto Delat'?* in St. Petersburg)²⁶ and extreme right-wing publications

²⁵ A year earlier, *Izvestia* received a similar warning for an article about discriminatory practices in Yakutia.

²⁶ The confiscation occurred in late August 2008.

alike (the Moscow authorities confiscated most of the DPNI's stickers prepared for the Russian March 2008).

Serious concerns have been expressed over the Supreme Court ruling of 11 September 2008 on the appeal of the Union of Right-Wing Forces (*Soiuz pravyykh sil*, SPS) challenging the outcome of elections to the State Duma and mentioning specifically the confiscation of campaign materials on suspicion of extremism. The Supreme Court effectively upheld – without stating it directly – the practice of such confiscations even in the absence of official review findings or any involvement in extremist activity criminal cases.

Yet another abusive practice – the removal of candidates from elections on the pretext of their extremism – is less visible than before, but it still exists. On 17 March 2008 in Saratov, the district election commission annulled the registration of Communist Party candidate Sergei Mikhailov, editor-in-chief of the *Saratov Reporter* (*Saratovskii reporter*), on grounds that he had lost his right to be elected after being issued a warning for the dissemination of extremist materials. They referred to articles which had triggered warnings against the newspaper back in 2007. We consider both warnings unfounded, and one of them, related to a widely reported case of an illustration featuring Vladimir Putin as Schtirnitz, was eventually lifted.²⁷ However, regardless of the assessment of the publications in question, the law did not permit Mikhailov's removal from the elections, since he was not the author of the articles. Indeed, a court overruled the decision of the election committee on 24 April – after the election campaign.

In 2008, we observed more cases under article 282² of the Criminal Code (participation in a banned organization). So far, only Hizb ut-Tahrir members have been convicted under this article without additional charges, but other groups have been targeted as well.

We do not consider article 282² harmful or unfair, but we believe that its enforcement should be conditional upon evidence of public danger associated with the banned organization, proven and established by a competent court. It is not known exactly why Hizb ut-Tahrir was banned by the Supreme Court. In contrast, evidence of public danger in the Omsk Ingling case (banned in 2004) and in the Tatarstan RNE case (banned in 2003) was sufficient (RNE members convicted under article 282² in 2008 also faced charges for violent crimes). Even though it was clear by April 2008 that the ban of the National Bolshevik Party (*Natsional-bol'shevistskaia partiia*,

²⁷ See details in A. Verkhovsky, Op. cit., p. 71.

NBP) was ill-founded,²⁸ the Supreme Court refused to reconsider the case on 1 April 2008. Thus, the current ban of the NBP is based on one judicial error and two opinions of the prosecutor's office, neither of which has been upheld in criminal proceedings.

At least five criminal cases were opened against NBP activists under article 282² in 2008; in all cases it supplemented other charges brought against the activists for participation in actions for which the punishment could not be particularly severe – for refusing to pay in a restaurant to protest against rising prices, for example. In 2008, both sentences delivered in such cases were probationary; however, in March 2009 for the first time offenders were sentenced to real prison terms under 282² in Khabarovsk and Moscow.

The federal list of banned extremist materials

We have often mentioned the numerous problems with the federal blacklist of extremist materials.²⁹ Not only is the list poorly designed and drafted, it is also arbitrarily enforced.

The arbitrariness is partly related to the vague definition of extremism. As a result, the authorities have banned certain historical sources, such as (admittedly xenophobic) books written in the early twentieth century, writings by contemporary radical political leaders, religious texts and even history studies. For example, in 2008 they banned the book *Slavery or Freedom* (*Kabala ili Svoboda*), written in early twentieth century by antisemite Georgii Butmi; books by Petr Kuznetsov, leader of the Penza recluses (see above); and Ayatollah Khomeini's *Legacy*.³⁰ They even tried to ban Hitler's biography by Joachim Fest. The bans hinder research in many humanities subjects.

²⁸ To remind the reader, the judicial ban of the party relied on three earlier episodes. One of them was a judicial mistake: even though activists of NBP's Chelyabinsk chapter were found guilty under article 282, the National Bolshevik Party had not only denounced the offenders and their statements prior to their trial, but had expelled them from the party for the same texts which eventually caused the activists to be tried and convicted. By the time of the ban, no judgment had been delivered in two other cases (in which party members were tried for scattering leaflets in the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg and for grabbing the ballot box from the election officer in Odintsovo). On 28 November 2007, the incident in St. Petersburg was resolved in a peaceful settlement, which prompted the NBP to apply for a reversal of the ban. On 26 March 2008, the Odintsovo ballot box case was heard and the offender was convicted for misdemeanor, which did not however involve charges of extremism.

²⁹ See the report *Radical Nationalism in Russia in 2008, and Efforts to Counteract It* in this book.

³⁰ Found extremist by Gorodishche District Court, Penza region, on 21 February 2008.

Even though courts usually rely on the findings of certain academic experts, this fact alone rarely ensures good judgment. Firstly, according to the Criminal Procedure Code, judges cannot and should not rely on experts to make a legal assessment of the case, and should not ask experts such questions, although they often do. Secondly, the expert opinion in many cases is not supported by evidence, so the judge is supposed to trust the expert's words. Thirdly, in many cases, experts called to testify in court do not have adequate expertise to deal with the evidence in question.

Following protests from Muslim believers and human rights defenders, the problem was acknowledged by the Presidential Administration. Proposals have been made to clarify criteria for blacklisting Islamic books and to set up a Muslim expert panel to establish whether certain books contain evidence of extremism. However, there has been no follow up,³¹ and in any case setting up a Muslim panel would have been unfair and selective, given that the blacklisted texts are diverse. If the authorities insist on using the controversial blacklist, it would be logical to limit potential harm by clarifying criteria for banning certain materials, setting up an appeal procedure, adopting rules for bibliographical details to be included with the banned title, providing a procedure for accessing banned materials, etc.

Unfair persecution of hate campaigners

Unfounded anti-extremist pressure against groups and individuals who are otherwise involved in illegal activity (such as xenophobic propaganda), but have done nothing wrong in the case they get punished for, is particularly disorienting. This problem can be illustrated by the authorities' first attempt to close the newspaper *Duel*. In February 2008 the paper successfully appealed the order of its liquidation following two unfounded warnings from the Federal Service for the Supervision of Mass Media, Communications and the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (Rossviaz'okhrankul'tura).³² However, the paper eventually received new warnings (which we find to be appropriate) and was closed anyway. The problem is that the material entitled 'Your Vote - Your Judgment', which triggered the first warnings, was blacklisted as extremist in 2008 (in our opinion, for no good reason).

³¹ Members of a recently updated advisory panel, set up by the Ministry of Justice and operating since April 2009 under a new set of rules, do not review contended texts – the panel chaired by Alexander Dvorkin cannot be expected to provide an adequate expert opinion anyway.

³² See details in A. Verkhovsky, Op. cit., p. 72.

Perhaps the most illustrative example was the persecution of the newspaper *New Petersburg (Novyi Peterburg)*. Even though the paper had consistently engaged in xenophobic propaganda and triggered numerous public complaints to the police, the authorities failed to respond – that is, until the paper supported the Dissenters' Marches. A series of warnings were issued to the paper within a short period; the paper was suspended from publication, and in February 2008 a court ordered its closure. The management of the paper attempted an appeal, but failed: on 13 May, the Supreme Court upheld the verdict. Two articles were considered in the proceedings against the paper – 'Why We Will Join the Dissenters' March on 25 November' by its editor Nikolai Andrushchenko and 'Here Is the Real Candidate' by Konstantin Cherniaev. Clearly, neither of the texts could be described as extremist; similarly, the label of extremism did not fit yet another text targeted by an official warning: 'Time to Buy Weapons. How Putin's Oprichniks Kill Souls and Faith', also by Andrushchenko.

Andrushchenko faced charges under article 280 of the Criminal Code for publishing four of his articles in the paper (including both of the above), but again, the charges were clearly unfounded.³³

After lengthy proceedings and numerous appeals to the Supreme Court, the paper won the case in January 2009. Rossviaz'okhrankul'tura's warnings issued for Andrushchenko's two articles were quashed, alongside the pursuant judicial order to close the paper. In the meantime, no issues of the paper were published pending the final judgment.

The case against *New Petersburg* was also used to harass human rights advocates who had nothing to do with the paper. On 4 December 2008, the Memorial Society's office in St. Petersburg was searched – allegedly to investigate their involvement with extremists (specifically, with *New Petersburg*). At the time of writing, the organization is challenging the legality of the search. Meanwhile, a Russian diplomat made a public statement to an international forum alleging that Memorial was financing extremist activity. The organization received no subsequent explanations, let alone apologies, from the official.

Absurd enforcement

Growing rates of anti-extremist pressure result in numerous administrative absurdities, due primarily to a lack of clear legal definitions. Below are just a few examples.

³³ See details in: 'V Sankt-Peterburge nachalsia sud po delu zhurnalista Nikolaia Andrushchenko', *Natsionalizm i ksenofobiia*, SOVA Center website, 20 May – 3 July 2008 (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/89CCE27/89CD1C9/B1A85BC>).

On 12 February 2008, the Perm newspaper *For the Individual (Za Cheloveka)* was warned for publishing an article entitled ‘Putin: Our Good Hitler’ by civil society activist Igor Averkiev. The text of the article was reviewed for potential violation of articles 280 and 282 of the Criminal Code. Averkiev avoided criminal prosecution, but the warning was not lifted.

In August, authorities in Sverdlovsk region banned the campaign video of a candidate running against a United Russia Party representative in the local elections. They claimed that the video contained evidence of extremism; in particular that it showed an actor saying, ‘A man with a full belly thinks no one is hungry.’ The court found incitement to social hatred between rich and poor.

Even more absurd was a warning issued to a multimedia store in St. Petersburg for selling Zone 88 Japanese anime films; the prosecutor’s office perceived the combination of a cross (which did not resemble a Nazi swastika at all) and the 88 number in the title as promotion of neo-Nazi skinheads.

Such incidents negatively affect the targets of administrative pressure who may suffer damage to their reputation as well as financial losses. Moreover, they undermine the reputation and credibility of the law enforcement authorities.

In an embarrassing and widely discussed case in the spring of 2008, the Novosibirsk regional prosecutor’s office issued an anti-extremism warning to Viacheslav Verevochkin, a reconstructor of military vehicles and technology. A mock fight between the Soviet T-34 and the Nazi ‘Prague’ tanks was staged in a village of Novosibirsk region, reenacting a scene from WWII history. Both tanks were manned by people wearing appropriate historical costumes and symbols; the Nazi tank bore a white cross – the latter triggered the prosecutorial warning. It appears that the prosecutor’s office did not only mistake the Wehrmacht cross for a Nazi symbol, but issued a warning which failed to take into account the context of its use. The story was reported by the mass media as an absurdity of anti-extremist enforcement, but the regional prosecutor’s office insisted on the warning, rather than admit their mistake.³⁴

Apparently, some right-wing radical activists known to the prosecutor’s office were involved in the mock fight, but the prosecutors should have picked a better occasion to suppress their unlawful conduct – by failing to do so, they undermined their own (otherwise quite impressive) achievements in this area, as well as the legitimacy of law enforcement measures.

Prosecutors are responsible for the prevention, as well as the suppression, of extremist activity. Such prevention mainly takes the form of official warnings

³⁴ On 19 June 2008, Sergei Shmonin, a participant in this mock combat, was fined 900 rubles for the display of Nazi symbols.

sent out in huge numbers to various organizations. This type of prosecutorial response is on the rise: from 12,000 warnings in 2007 to 29,000 in the nine month period between January and September 2008. Far from all of these warnings are intended to suppress extremism – even in the broader sense established in the law. In Kaliningrad region, an anti-extremist warning was issued following a suspected violation of immigration rules (*‘notification forms completed by the inviting party to notify authorities of the arrival of foreign nationals are not adequately checked to make sure that the forms are completed in the required manner’*); the authorities in Voronezh region have used anti-extremism as a pretext to require reports from libraries on compliance with the legal deposit legislation,³⁵ while the prosecutor’s office in Tula region have reported on their fight against extremism by referring to measures taken against the local administration and the family of a child who did not attend school on religious grounds.

The above anti-extremist absurdities have little to do with politics; rather, they are caused by a lack of clarity in the law and pursuant executive orders, as well as the professional incompetence of certain bureaucrats. Pressure from central government to step up the fight against extremism causes subordinate officials to imitate activity, e.g. by sending out warnings to libraries for the possession and alleged issue of blacklisted extremist materials. This situation highlights a legal conflict between the Law on Libraries whereby a library must issue any material available to it, and the Law on Combating Extremist Activity prohibiting the issue of blacklisted materials. It is highly improbable that public prosecutors are unaware of the conflict.

Translated by I. Savelieva.

³⁵ Publishers are required to provide copies of every publication to designated legal deposit libraries.

Galina Kozhevnikova

Hate Language and Elections: Federal and Regional Levels

Based on the monitoring period
Autumn-Winter 2007-2008

Introduction

This report is based on the findings of the seventh of a series of monitoring studies carried out as part of a coalition-based project, Hate Language in the Russian Mass Media. This project has been running since 2001 with support from the Open Society Institute and covers issues of ethno-religious intolerance. This version of the report has been substantially abridged for translation into English; the full version is available in Russian from SOVA Center's website (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/213716E/21728E3/B2A44F2>).

This monitoring was carried out between 1 September 2007 and March 2008, in two phases. Phase one (between 1 September and 1 December, 2007) coincided with the State Duma election campaign (based for the first time on party lists only). Phase two (between 1 December 2007 and 1 March 2008) coincided with the presidential election campaign. (At the same time, similar surveys were carried out in six Russian regions, but their findings are not included in the abridged version of the report).

Wherever possible and necessary, the findings were compared across all phases, starting from 2001.¹ We feel that our most valuable achievement has been making possible this comparison across different parts and phases of the monitoring effort, rather than simply providing absolute figures which may be questioned from various perspectives.²

We use the term *language of hate*, or *hate language* in a broader sense than that which is attached to the term *hate speech* in modern English. The moni-

tors selected those publications/statements which literally fit the description of a certain type of hate language (see below), i.e. any intolerant pronouncements against an ethnic or religious group and/or its member, contributing to negative ethno-religious stereotypes. The monitors were instructed to check whether they would be offended by the same kind of statement about an ethnic or religious group they identified with. The selected materials were then categorized under a number of headings, mainly describing the types and targets of hate language and the journalist's attitude (positive, neutral or negative) towards the intolerant statement.

We use all terms describing the targets of hate language in *italic*, because strictly speaking, the targets are media-projected images of certain ethnic or religious groups, rather than the groups *per se*.

To facilitate analysis, we have used an 'aggregate' amount of hate language, i.e. the sum total of offensive statements reported by the media either neutrally or approvingly.

Before we report our findings, we should admit that we find our research methodology less accurate than before. It only documents formal expressions of intolerance or explicit xenophobia, but it does not allow us to categorize hatred expressed symbolically and/or by references to established ethno-religious stereotypes. It appears, however, that ethno-religious intolerance in the media has been shifting towards this type of hate language.

For example, *Literaturnaia Gazeta* published an article about the growth of food prices, where the author attributed the problem to "foreigners who control the markets." The article did not once mention the ethnicity of the criminal characters referred to.³ Yet it was pretty obvious to the monitor that the author was referring to clearly ethnic stereotypes of "alien invaders of the marketplace" (implying, predominantly, natives of the Caucasus). Our methodology does not allow us to categorize such publications as expressions of hate language, which reduces our statistics and fails to reflect the actual xenophobic hostility in the sphere of information and communication.

Likewise, this methodology does not account for the serious "ethnization" of concepts which used to be ethnicity-neutral just a few years ago – such as citizenship (nationality) and place of origin. This obvious shift in perceptions caused us to include the term "migrant" under hate language at an earlier phase. However we did not regard the unwarranted mentioning of perpetrators' nationalities in the coverage of crime reports as expressions of ethnic hatred. Likewise, we did not consider attacks against Russia's foreign policy opponents as hate language, even though it was not always easy to dis-

¹ After the first phase in 2001–2002, the methodology has been substantially modified. Currently some indicators cannot be reliably compared for technical reasons.

² For an overview of critical remarks about our methodology, see E. Ponarin, D. Dubrovskii, A. Tolkachova, R. Akifeva, 'Indeks (in)tolerantnosti pressy', *Iazyk vrzhdy protiv obshchestva*, pp. 80–86.

³ Iuri Vigor, 'Kto otvetit za bazar?', *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 21 November 2007.

tinguish between political and ethnic hate language, particularly when they targeted “Americans.”

So we can say that our findings reflect the **minimum** level of ethno-religious aggressiveness manifested during the 2007 election campaign, while the actual level was subjectively perceived by project participants to be much higher. We now feel that our research methodology needs some serious updating and adjustment.

Types of Hate Language

A list of 17 distinct types of hate language below follows the same order as our statistics (except where specifically indicated otherwise).

A. calls to violence (i.e. with regard to a specific situation, indicating the target, and promoting violence as acceptable conduct; involves abstract calls, such as *Beat the Yids!*);

B. calls to discrimination, including blanket slogans;

C. veiled calls to violence and discrimination (promotion of historical or current examples of violence or discrimination; statements such as “it would be good to do so and so to someone”, “it is high time...” etc.);

D. creating a negative image of an ethnic or religious group (rather than accusing them of anything in particular (see other types), the negative image is conveyed through the tone of a text or a passage);

E. justification of historical violence and discrimination (such as “Turks massacred Armenians in 1915 in self-defense”);

F. publications and statements questioning historically established facts of violence and discrimination (for example, “Chechens were deported for siding with Hitler”);

G. statements alleging inferiority, such as lack of cultural sophistication, intellectual abilities, lack of capacity for creative work with regard to a certain ethnic or religious group (such as “Azeris only trade in the market” [i.e. do nothing but]);

H. statements alleging historical crimes committed by a certain ethnic or religious group (such as “Poles have always plotted against Russians”);

I. statements alleging the criminal nature of a certain ethnic or religious group (for example, “Roma are thieves”);

J. statements alleging the moral deficiencies of a certain ethnic or religious group (“Jews are greedy”; it is important to distinguish this type from allegations of cultural or intellectual deficiency);

K. statements alleging disproportional superiority, i.e. that a certain ethnic or religious group is disproportionately represented among the wealthy, in government, in the media, etc;

L. statements alleging that a certain ethnic or religious group negatively affects society or the state (“diluting national [ethnic] identity”; “aliens [persons of non-Russian ethnicity] are turning Moscow into a non-Russian city”);

M. mention of an ethnic or religious group or its members in a humiliating or offensive context (e.g. in crime reports);

N. appeals to prevent the settlement in a region (district, city, etc.) of migrants belonging to a certain ethnic or religious group (for example, protests against building a mosque in an “Orthodox city”);

O. quoting radical xenophobic statements and texts without comments indicating that the journalist does not necessarily share the views of his/her interviewee; likewise, offering newspaper space to explicitly nationalist propaganda without editorial comments or polemics;

P. accusing a group of attempts to seize power or territory (literally; as distinct from appeals against their settlement in a region);

Q. denying nationality [citizenship] (i.e. describing Russian nationals of a certain ethnic identity as foreigners).

We have tentatively categorized these types of hate language based on how harsh they are:

Harsh:

- calls to violence
- calls to discrimination
- veiled calls to violence and discrimination
- appeals to prevent settlement in a region

Medium

- justification of historical violence and discrimination
- publications and statements questioning historically established facts of violence and discrimination
- statements alleging historical crimes committed by a certain ethnic or religious group in its entirety
- statements alleging the criminal nature of a certain ethnic or religious group
- statements alleging disproportional superiority of a certain ethnic or religious group

- statements alleging that a certain ethnic or religious group negatively affects society or the state
- accusing a group of attempts to seize power or territory
- denial of nationality

Mild

- creating a negative image of an ethnic or religious group
- statements alleging historical crimes committed by a certain ethnic or religious group
- statements alleging moral deficiencies of a certain ethnic or religious group
- mention of an ethnic or religious group or its members in a humiliating or offensive context
- quoting radical xenophobic statements and texts without comment

Targets of Hate Language

A list of 28 distinct targets of hate language has been made. As before, the targets will be listed in the same order as the relevant statistics below (except where specifically indicated otherwise).

1. Black [African] people
2. Americans
3. Western Europeans
4. Jews
5. Ukrainians
6. Russians
7. Roma
8. Tajiks
9. Chinese
10. Vietnamese
11. Chechens
12. Armenians
13. Azeris
14. Iraqis
15. Arabs (other than Iraqis)
16. Meskhetian Turks
17. other ethnicities of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (other than Chechens, Armenians and Azeris)
18. Caucasus natives in general
19. Asians (in or outside the NIS, other than those explicitly mentioned);

20. other ethnic categories (i.e. more or less specific targets other than those listed above)
21. indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia (no specific target identified)
22. Orthodox Christians
23. Muslims
24. Catholics (and Uniates)
25. new and small religious groups
26. other religious categories
27. indiscriminate religious xenophobia (non-Orthodox, non-Christian, non-Muslim, etc.)
28. migrants

Sources

The list of monitored media included one daily and eight weekly TV shows, eight weekly and five daily newspapers, 22 print and broadcast media outlets in total.

Newspapers:

Daily:

1. Komsomol'skaia Pravda
2. Moskovskii Komsomolets
3. Tvoi Den'
4. Gazeta
5. Izvestiia
6. Novye Izvestiia
7. Vremia Novostei
8. Nezavisimaia Gazeta

Weekly:

9. *Russkii Kurier*
10. *Literaturnaia Gazeta*
11. *Argumenty i Fakty*
12. *Zhizn' za Vsiu Nedel'iu*
13. *Rossia*⁴

⁴ Not published since 2008.

TV Shows

Daily:

1. TV debates (RTR, evening broadcast)⁵

Weekly:

2. Program Maximum (NTV)
3. Sudite Sami (First Channel)
4. K Barrieru (NTV)
5. Postscriptum (TV Center)
6. Vesti Nedeli (Russia)
7. Nedelia (REN-TV)
8. Russkii Vzgliad (Moskovia)
9. 5th Studio (Russia)⁶

The Period of the Parliamentary Election Campaign

Summary Findings

In total over the monitoring period, 356 entries were added to our database. This is slightly more than the total number of selected publications, because more than one entry was made for some articles to document more than one hate language type/target pair. Based on the attitude of the journalist towards the hate language s/he was reporting, the entries were distributed in the following way:

Position of the author	Support	%	Neutral	%	Disapprove	%	Total	%
Total items:	211	59.4	77	21.7	68	19.15	356	100
including discussion of the HL	2	0	3	0	11	0	16	0

Let us compare the monthly average amounts of hate language in the federal mass media at various monitoring phases: year 2002 – 192 entries per month; 2003 – 187, 2004 – 143, 2005 – 97, 2006 – 132, year 2007 – 119 entries (the

⁵ Published in November 2007 and in February 2008.

⁶ Not published in December 2007 and January 2008.

monitoring was always carried out in autumn). We were surprised to find the amount of hate language slightly lower in 2007 than in 2006: we had expected the mass media, as well as political candidates, to use xenophobic rhetoric actively in the run-up to the elections.

On the other hand, in contrast to the previous year, in 2007 there were few serious factors to provoke xenophobic rhetoric – such as the Kondopoga riots and the anti-Georgian campaign in 2006.⁷

The only such factor was “the Penza recluses’ case.” It was reported in November 2007 that a group of doomsday believers from the village of Pogonovka, Penza Oblast, had barricaded themselves in a cave to wait for judgment day which, according to the group’s leader Pyotr Kuznetsov, would come in May 2008. The story triggered a hysterical reaction in the mass media and influenced hate language dynamics: usually, we observe the peak of hate language in October, but this time it occurred in November, triggered by the Pogonovka case; 27 publications (i.e. 20% of all media reports containing hate language in November) were “anti-sectarian,” while in previous months and at earlier monitoring phases their frequency had never exceeded 1 to 3 per month.

We have noted in previous years that a crisis (such as the hostage-taking in Moscow in 2002) usually provokes an outburst of hate language, which is not limited to targets directly relevant to the crisis, and after some decline immediately following the events, the overall level of hostility goes up and remains at a level higher than before the crisis. We can now see that in contrast to a spontaneous crisis, massive propaganda campaigns unleashed by the political leadership fail to produce the same effect: the media hysterics about Kondopoga and the anti-Georgian campaign did not increase the overall level of hate language in 2007. That said, the anti-Georgian campaign caused hate language targeting Georgians to increase manifold in 2007, to a far higher level than in any period before 2006. In a similar way, the anti-Estonian campaign in May 2007 greatly increased the amount of hate language against Estonians.

There are grounds for moderate optimism in the dynamics of the journalists’ disapproval of hate language:

⁷ In September 2006 a grassroots crime in Kondopoga, Karelia, triggered riots lasting over many days, with looting and arson attacks targeting properties of people from the Caucasus. The rioters effectively got away unpunished. The ultra-right regard the Kondopoga events as their victory in the “war against immigrants.” They coined a slogan – Kondopoga is a Hero City – to encourage similar riots in other Russian regions. See details in Galina Kozhevnikova. Autumn – 2006: Under the Kondopoga Banner, *Natsionalizm i ksenofobiia*, SOVA Center website (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA2468/6BB4208/884A3C7#r2>).

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Disapproval of HL, %:	33.30	15.55	9.3	20.47	22.2	15.15	19.15

Admittedly, as we analyze the texts containing disapproval of hate language, we find that most of them are articles about xenophobia; while more such articles have appeared recently, we find hardly any disapproval of hate language elsewhere in the media.

Types of Hate Language

In the tables below, we highlight values higher than 20 and percentages higher than 5. Lines containing zero values have been removed for convenience. At this monitoring phase, we did not observe the following of the 17 hate language types: *justification of historical violence and discrimination*; statements *questioning historically established facts of violence and discrimination*; and *quoting radical xenophobic statements and texts without comment*. The observed types of hate language are listed in the tables below in decreasing order of the numbers of negative citations.

Absolute Values

HL Type:	Support	Neutral	Aggregate	Disapprove	Total
Mention in a humiliating or offensive context	80	31	111	14	125
Allege moral deficiency	58	13	71	9	80
Create a negative image of a group	28	12	40	6	46
Allege inherent criminality of a group	23	5	28	6	34
Allege inferiority	20	4	24	5	29
Accuse of negative influence	11	4	15	4	19
Appeal to prevent settlement in a region	9	4	13	1	14
Call to discrimination	2	3	5	8	13
Veiled calls to violence and discrimination	3	3	6	6	12
Denial of nationality	5	4	9	0	9

HL Type:	Support	Neutral	Aggregate	Disapprove	Total
Allege disproportional superiority of a certain ethnic or religious group	4	2	6	3	9
Call to violence	0	1	1	8	9
Accuse a group of attempts to seize power or territory	2	2	4	1	5
Allege historical crimes of a group	2	0	2	2	4
Total	247	88	335	73	408

Percentages

HL Type:	Support	Neutral	Aggregate	Disapprove	Total
Mention in a humiliating or offensive context	32.4	35.2	33.13	19.2	30.6
Alleged moral deficiency	23.5	14.8	21.19	12.3	19.6
Create a negative image of a group	11.3	13.6	11.94	8.22	11.3
Allege inherent criminality of a group	9.31	5.68	8.36	8.22	8.33
Allege inferiority	8.1	4.55	7.16	6.85	7.11
Accuse of negative influence	4.45	4.55	4.48	5.48	4.66
Appeal to prevent settlement in a region	3.64	4.55	3.88	1.37	3.43
Call to discrimination	0.81	3.41	1.49	11	3.19
Veiled calls to violence and discrimination	1.21	3.41	1.79	8.22	2.94
Denial of nationality	2.02	4.55	2.69	0	2.21
Allege disproportional superiority of a certain ethnic or religious group	1.62	2.27	1.79	4.11	2.21
Call to violence	0	1.14	0.3	11	2.21
Accuse a group of attempts to seize power or territory	0.81	2.27	1.19	1.37	1.23

HL Type:	Support	Neutral	Aggregate	Disapprove	Total
Allege historical crimes of a group	0.81	0	0.6	2.74	0.98
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The most common type throughout all monitoring phases has been a tendency to mention a group in a humiliating or offensive context – often in the form of unnecessary emphasis on the ethnicity of participants in a criminal episode.

Mention in a humiliating or offensive context, by year, in %

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Aggregate	41.9	34.38	42.05	45.09	29.86	33.13
Total	38.48	32.57	37.33	35.59	28.4	30.6

The 2006 debates around a bill which would ban any mention of ethnicity in crime reports elicited a variety of responses from the media.⁸

Some publications, indeed, reduced unwarranted references to ethnicity. Our monitoring found such references to have dropped from 13 to 5 between 2007 and 2006 in *Gazeta* and from 32 to 15 in *Tvoi Den'*. Looking at the distribution of such references in *Tvoi Den'*, we assume that the commissioning editor plays a key role in deciding whether or not intolerant crime reports find their way to the press, because such reports appeared in the paper “in batches” over certain periods, usually after a long absence – for example, on September 24 and 27, and then on October 24 and 30, etc.

Moskovskii Komsomolets (MK) – the main producer of such crime reports – showed how a paper can get away with breaking this law, should it ever be adopted. Formerly, crime reports published in *MK* mentioned the suspect's ethnicity, but today they mention the country of origin, the name, and – so as to rule out any doubt – publish the suspect's photo. Between September and November 2007, 22 of the 166 published crime reports contained what could be regarded as ethnic markers, and all of these markers referred to “non-Slavs.”

⁸ See details in Galina Kozhevnikova, Alexander Verkhovsky, ‘The Sowing Season in the Field of Russian Nationalism’, *Natsionalizm i ksenofobiia*, SOVA Center website (http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA2468/6BB4208/9845B8F#r4_1).

Differences in editorial policies showed very clearly that the inappropriate “ethnization” of crime reports was intentional. For example, on 23 September 2007 a driver shot and killed two road workers for damaging his car. On September 24, *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda (KP)* and *Tvoi Den'* reported the incident emphasizing that the shooter was “a native of the Caucasus.” On the following day, the first two papers published a photo fit of the shooter; even though the facial features did not resemble “a native of the Caucasus,” *KP*, once again, emphasized the shooter's alleged origin. *MK* did not reiterate the allegation, but did not correct the original report either, and referred readers to it once again. A month later, the shooter was apprehended and turned out to have nothing to do with the Caucasus.⁹

The second most common type as revealed by the recent monitoring was *alleged moral deficiency*, the third was *creating a negative image of a group*, and the fourth was *alleged inherent criminality of a group*. These top four are pretty common for all phases of our monitoring, and the proportion of statements under these four headings increased between 2006 and 2007.

The reason for such an increase, and an important indicator of positive development, was a dramatic drop in harsher forms of hate language over the same period:

HL Type	Call to violence		Call to discrimination		Veiled call to violence and discrimination		Appeal to prevent settlement in a region	
	Number	% ¹⁰	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2002	35	3.29	39	3.67	22	2.07	49	4.61
2003	19	1.8	42	3.99	17	1.61	51	4.84
2004	10	4.01	11	5.07	7	3.23	12	5.53
2005	11	4.66	7	2.97	6	2.54	30	12.71
2006	23	3.55	45	6.94	42	6.48	31	4.78
2007	9	2.21	13	3.19	12	2.94	14	3.43

⁹ See Khairbek Almakaev, ‘Voditel’ “Mersedesa” rasstrelial dorozhnykh rabochikh’, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, 24 September. Almakaev, ‘Sostavlen fotorobot voditelia “mersa”, rasstreliavshego dorozhnykh rabochikh’, Ibid. 25 September. Almakaev, ‘Poiman voditel’, rasstreliavshego dorozhnykh rabochikh’, Ibid. 26 October. ‘Voditel’ rasstrelial dorozhnykh rabochikh za userdie’, *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 24 October 2007. ‘Moskovskikh rabochikh rasstrelial bezrobotnyi iz Sankt-Peterburga’, Ibid. 26 October 2007.

¹⁰ Of the total amount of hate language.

For the first time over years of observation, we report a drop in all harsh types of hate language, and the current rates are either the lowest or close to the lowest over the entire project period.

Admittedly, the above statistics include the statements made by ultra-nationalists quoted either with disapproval or neutrally, and the amount of such quoting dropped dramatically due to intentional and demonstrative absence of reports about the Russian March in the media.

For the sake of comparison, see below the dynamics reflecting journalists' attitudes towards harsh statements. Following a drop at the previous phase, the level of disapproval across three of the four harsher types either peaked or was about to peak; however, the most common type, which comes third in the table below and is summarized in a common Russian phrase "*Ponaekhali tut...*" [meaning 'they arrived over a period of time, in large enough numbers to become an annoyance'], met with virtually no disapproval, and its rates were the lowest over the years of our observations.

Disapproval of Harsh Types of Hate Language, %¹¹

HL Type	Call to violence	Call to discrimination	Appeal to prevent settlement in a region	Veiled call to violence and discrimination
2001	80	59.22	59.03	24.32
2002	65.71	53.84	32.65	27.27
2003	52.63	52.38	13.72	17.64
2004	80	42.9	33.3	27.3
2005	72.7	70.3	60	66.7
2006	47.8	26.67	19.35	30.95
2007	88.89	61.54	7.14	50

Targets of Hate Language

Similarly to the tables listing the hate language types, below we highlight values higher than 20 and percentages higher than 5. Empty lines are omitted. At this phase of our monitoring a few ethnicities were not mentioned as hate

¹¹ The total amount of hate language across these types is 100%.

language targets: Vietnamese, Iraqis and Meskhetian Turks. The observed targets of hate language are listed in the tables below in decreasing order of the numbers of negative citations.

Absolute Values

HL Target:	Support	Neutral	Aggregate	Disapprove	Total
Caucasus natives in general	28	8	36	8	44
Indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia	12	8	20	21	41
New and small religious groups	21	9	30	2	32
Migrants	15	9	24	5	29
Other ethnic categories	18	5	23	4	27
Western Europeans	16	4	20	4	24
Other ethnicities of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (other than Chechens, Armenians and Azeris)	13	3	16	5	21
Chechens	13	5	18	2	20
Jews	9	4	13	7	20
Muslims	10	6	16	3	19
Tajiks	4	6	10	5	15
Russians	12	2	14	1	15
Americans	10	1	11	4	15
Asians (in or outside the NIS, other than those explicitly mentioned)	6	8	14	0	14
Black [African] people	4	5	9	3	12
Azeris	8	1	9	2	11
Ukrainians	3	3	6	5	11

HL Target:	Support	Neutral	Aggregate	Disapprove	Total
Chinese	8	0	8	0	8
Roma	6	2	8	0	8
Armenians	4	0	4	1	5
Indiscriminate religious xenophobia	0	0	0	4	4
Arabs (other than Iraqis)	3	1	4	0	4
Other religious categories	0	0	0	2	2
Catholics (and Uniates)	1	1	2	0	2
Orthodox Christians	2	0	2	0	2
Total	226	91	317	88	405

Percentages

HL Target:	Support	Neutral	Aggregate	Disapprove	Total
Caucasus natives in general	12.4	8.79	11.36	9.09	10.9
Indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia	5.31	8.79	6.31	23.9	10.1
New and small religious groups	9.29	9.89	9.46	2.27	7.9
Migrants	6.64	9.89	7.57	5.68	7.16
Other ethnic categories	7.96	5.49	7.26	4.55	6.67
Western Europeans	7.08	4.4	6.31	4.55	5.93
Other ethnicities of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (other than Chechens, Armenians and Azeris)	5.75	3.3	5.05	5.68	5.19

Chechens	5.75	5.49	5.68	2.27	4.94
Jews	3.98	4.4	4.1	7.95	4.94
Muslims	4.42	6.59	5.05	3.41	4.69
Tajiks	1.77	6.59	3.15	5.68	3.7
Russians	5.31	2.2	4.42	1.14	3.7
Americans	4.42	1.1	3.47	4.55	3.7
Asians (in or outside the NIS, other than those explicitly mentioned)	2.65	8.79	4.42	0	3.46
Black [African] people	1.77	5.49	2.84	3.41	2.96
Azeris	3.54	1.1	2.84	2.27	2.72
Ukrainians	1.33	3.3	1.89	5.68	2.72
Chinese	3.54	0	2.52	0	1.98
Roma	2.65	2.2	2.52	0	1.98
Armenians	1.77	0	1.26	1.14	1.23
Indiscriminate religious xenophobia	0	0	0	4.55	0.99
Arabs (other than Iraqis)	1.33	1.1	1.26	0	0.99
Other religious categories	0	0	0	2.27	0.49
Catholics (and Uniates)	0.44	1.1	0.63	0	0.49
Orthodox Christians	0.88	0	0.63	0	0.49
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Since the previous phase, the relative distribution of hate language targets has changed substantially. Just one year before, six of the 24 observed targets attracted more than 70% of the xenophobic statements,¹² whereas during the most recent phase, only two targets – *Caucasus natives* and *indiscriminate ethnic*

¹² Indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia; Caucasus natives in general; other ethnicities of the Caucasus; Chechens; migrants; and Muslims.

xenophobia – had crossed the 10% threshold, and the overall distribution of hate statements was more equal.

The 2006 top target – *indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia* – was surpassed by *Caucasus natives* in 2007, whereas their relative proportions dropped from 15.3 % and 14.6 % to 10.1% and 10.9%, respectively.

Caucasus-related targets

% of the total amount of HL	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Caucasus natives in general	7.54	8.77	11.7	10	14.67	10.9
Other ethnicities of the Caucasus...	3.61	4.67	13.14 ²	1.82	13.35	5.19
Meskhethian Turks	0.21	0.57	0.49	0.91	0	0
Azeris	2.34	4.86	2.93	2.27	2.86	2.72
Armenians	1.49	2.00	1.95	1.36	1.9	1.23
Chechens	23.14	5.43	28.8	8.64	10.65	4.94
Sum total of anti-Caucasus statements	38.33	26.3	59.01	25	43.43	24.98

It is pretty clear why the *Chechens* and *other ethnicities of the Caucasus* were targeted less often. Under the latter heading, ethnic *Georgians* were most often targeted in 2006, but the anti-Georgian campaign was over by 2007. As to the former, the official coverage of Chechnya is now emphatically positive, and Chechenophobic rhetoric has been banished from the public arena, although we have no reason to believe that there is less Chechenophobia in society.

Interestingly, the overall level of anti-Caucasus rhetoric dropped in the run-up to important elections (in 2005, the elections to the Moscow City Duma were an important focus for the federal press).

There has also been a change in the indicators for the target *indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia*, which has been top of the list since 2005, when we first observed the phenomenon of replacing a concrete “enemy image” in the media (*Chechen, Muslim, etc.*) with an abstract one (*non-Russian*).

¹³ Including the *Ingushis*, considered separately in 2003 due to the events in Beslan.

Hate Language dynamics: indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia, in %¹⁴

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total	2.34	5.72	3.41	20	15.26	10.1
Aggregate	1.91	4.64	1.91	12.21	12.38	6.3
Aggregate HL / HL Disapproval Rate	68.19 / 31.81	71.67 / 28.33	42.86 / 57.14	47.73 / 52.27	69.8 / 30.2	48.79 / 51.21

The downward trend in percentage terms, in our opinion, is partially due to the fact that the term *migrant* has in recent years increasingly been used to describe an abstract “non-Russian” (and became a separate monitoring category in 2006). This category also skillfully used by propaganda campaigns to accommodate various targets (such as *Estonians*, because in autumn 2007 traces of the anti-Estonian campaign were still noticeable) and is affected by whether or not journalists cite nationalist slogans (in 2007, in contrast to other years, the mass media remained silent about the annual November Russian March).

The distribution of other hate language targets has changed as well.

Excluding collective terms such as other *ethnicities of the Caucasus* or *other ethnic categories* from our comparison, we find that *new and small religious groups* come third (7.9 %), and *migrants* come fourth (7.16% of all statements).

We began to include *migrants* as an ethnic target in our monitoring only in 2006, when the mass media had virtually stopped using this term other than in an ethnic context. This category immediately made it to the top in terms of the number of negative statements. Our monitoring over the two most recent years constantly finds anti-migrant rhetoric, even though the percentage of negative statements against *migrants* dropped from 10.15% to 7.16 %.

Increased hostility against *new religious groups* was clearly provoked by the Penza recluses’ case.

We did not find statements describing the recluses as “sectarians” and Kuznetsov’s group as a “sect”, etc., to be hate language. Regardless of the clearly negative meaning recently attached to the term “sect” in Russia, we

¹⁴ The total number of statements referring to this target is 100%.

find the choice of this term reasonable, if not for official or legal language, then at least for common usage and mass media reporting.¹⁵ Likewise, we did not consider personal attacks against members of the group as hate language. However, regrettably, many mass media outlets found it hard to stay within these boundaries. Reporters used the Penza recluses' story as a pretext to demand less freedom of religion and to describe sects as "harmful", usually with reference to ancient stories which had no connection at all to the Penza case. At the same time, disapproval of such "anti-sectarian" hate language was among the lowest observed throughout our monitoring, all targets included.

As is often the case, an unusual situation without precedents in the recent media coverage provoked an aggressive, unprofessional reaction, an outburst of xenophobic rhetoric against the alleged "culprits". Admittedly, the above characteristics do not apply to some of the monitored media: *Gazeta*, *Vremia Novostei* and *Novye Izvestiia* limited their coverage to well-balanced articles about problems associated with religious sects, and didn't make a scandal of the issue. In contrast, *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, *Izvestiia*, *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, *Tvoi Den'*, and to some extent *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, clearly demonstrated the tactics used effectively by the Russian media to discredit sects.

The first and particularly emotionally charged tactic was to allege poor treatment of children (*they are keeping them as hostages, children are getting ill but the recluses refuse all medication*) and pets (*"they left a kitten outside"* etc.).

The second tactic was to allege aggressiveness, proneness to violent crime (*"drawings made in human blood were found in the home of the sect's leader"* etc.).

And finally, the third tactic was to accuse the recluses of undermining national security (*"the sect's legs grow from abroad" [alleged foreign influence]*, [young male] recluses are trying to avoid military service, one of the female recluses used to have access to classified defense documents).

However, the hostility gradually decreased (while the Penza recluses continued to make headlines until late January 2008), from comparing the recluses to Wahhabi and accusing them of undermining the nation, to dismissing them as "sick people" and using derogatory epithets.

The proportion of antisemitic statements at this phase of the monitoring, even though it was not particularly high, reached its maximum since 2003, when *Vecherniaia Ryazan* – a newspaper where antisemitism was official editorial policy – was added to the monitored media.

¹⁵ The precise academic usage of the term sect lies outside the scope of our media monitoring.

The bulk of antisemitic statements which did not trigger journalists' disapproval consisted of jokes, notably more numerous at this monitoring phase than before. However, there were some explicitly antisemitic publications other than jokes – in *Literaturnaia Gazeta*.¹⁶

Proportion of antisemitic statements, by year

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Aggregate	5.1	6.48	1.27	2.91	1.66	4.1
Total	7.75	7.53	1.95	4.55	2.54	4.94

While at this phase we note a relatively high level of disapproval towards hate language, some significant targets never elicit any sympathy from journalists; as in the previous year, these are *Chinese* and *Roma*.

Disapproval of hate language, by main targets¹⁷

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia	31.81	28.33	57.14	52.27	30.2	51.22
Migrants	–	–	–	–	6.25	17.86
Chechens	11	10.53	22.03	5.21	5.97	10
Caucasus natives in general	35.2	8.71	29.15	9.09	14.13	21.05
Some total of anti-Caucasus statements	17.45	9.78	28.92	5.5	10.98	19.35

Hate Language aggregate tables

Type/target table

Hereafter, where the journalists' attitudes to hate language are not broken down, aggregate indicators of *support* or *neutral* are used. In the table below, we highlight values higher than 5.

¹⁶ Lev Pirogov, 'Ispravleniye oshibok', *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 28 November 2007; Georgi Dobysh, 'Otriakhnulis' ot starogo mira', *Ibid.*, 5 September 2007.

¹⁷ The total number of statements referring to this target is 100%.

Lines and columns with zero values have been deleted, including targets such as *Vietnamese, Iraqis, Meskhetian Turks, other religious categories, and indiscriminate religious xenophobia*; and hate language types such as *justification of historical violence and discrimination*; *statements questioning historically established facts of violence and discrimination*; and *quoting radical xenophobic statements and texts without comment*.

A	B	C	D	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	Total
Black [African] people														
0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	5	1	0	1	12
Americans														
0	0	0	1	4	0	0	5	0	1	2	0	0	0	13
Western Europeans														
0	0	0	1	2	0	1	12	0	3	4	0	0	0	23
Jews														
1	0	0	2	0	1	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	14
Ukrainians														
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	7
Russians														
0	2	0	1	1	0	0	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	14
Roma														
0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	6	0	0	0	9
Tajiks														
0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	1	11
Chinese														
0	0	0	5	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	11
Chechens														
0	0	0	1	0	0	7	2	0	0	8	0	0	1	19
Armenians														
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	4

A	B	C	D	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	Total
Azeris														
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	6	0	1	0	10
Arabs (other than Iraqis)														
0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	6
Other ethnicities of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (other than Chechens, Armenians and Azeris)														
0	0	0	2	2	0	1	5	0	0	10	0	0	0	20
Caucasus natives in general														
0	0	0	2	0	0	3	2	4	0	27	0	0	4	42
Asians (in or outside the NIS, other than those explicitly mentioned)														
0	0	0	1	2	0	0	4	1	0	5	2	0	1	16
Other ethnic categories														
0	0	0	2	7	0	2	8	1	0	3	0	0	1	24
Indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia														
0	2	6	2	0	2	0	5	0	0	5	2	1	2	27
Orthodox Christians														
0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Muslims														
0	0	0	2	0	0	3	4	0	0	7	4	0	0	20
Catholics (and Uniates)														
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
New and small religious groups														
0	1	0	8	3	0	4	4	0	10	9	1	1	0	41
Migrants														
0	0	0	7	2	0	6	5	0	2	2	4	0	2	30
Total														
1	5	6	44	27	3	33	82	7	16	117	17	4	14	377

The table above shows the ethnic and religious stereotypes present in the Russian mass media. Besides mention *in a humiliating or offensive context* applicable to most of the monitored targets, we find a major redistribution of negative references as compared to the previous year.

While back in 2006 *moral deficiency* was mostly attributed to *natives of the Caucasus* and *migrants*, at this phase of the monitoring such attacks targeted *Western Europeans* (12 statements) and *Russians* (nine). It should be noted that *Russians*, like *Jews*, mainly feature in jokes. Jokes about *Russians* often mention alcohol in some way or another.

Most statements *alleging inferiority* refer to *other ethnic groups* in the form of jokes; six of the seven make fun of the alleged sluggishness of *Estonians / natives of the Baltic region*. No group was targeted by such statements during the previous monitoring phase.

New religious groups are most often accused of *negative influence*, while at earlier phases *migrants* were targeted by this type of hate language.

Just two findings remain unchanged since 2006.

Chechens continue to be accused of *criminality* (seven statements), but less than before. Again, as in earlier monitoring phases, we can see how strong the terrorist stereotype is: any explosion (even of household gas) reported in Russia causes the journalists to suggest a Chechen connection as their first theory. This monitoring phase (covering the explosion of a bus in Togliatti on 31 October) was no exception.¹⁸

As to *veiled calls to violence and discrimination* (in other words, slogans like *Kondopoga is a Hero City*), these usually refer to no one in particular and fall under *indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia*. This time all such statements without exception are listed under this target.

Denial of nationality based on ethnicity and expressed as broad hints often – but not always – targets *Caucasus natives in general*. An article in *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* contained an exotic passage about *illegals*: “*Even the illegals have clear caste distinctions. The highest [caste] are Russians with Slavic facial features...*”¹⁹ (emphasis added, **G. K.**). The journalist uses the terms *illegals*, *migrant workers* and *immigrants* as synonyms, randomly and interchangeably throughout the text, creating a shocking impression.

We should mention a sharp (from 18 to seven) drop in cases of *mentioning in a humiliating or offensive context* with regard to Muslims. This means, in practical terms, that five years after the Nord-Ost hostage-taking crisis, and two

years after the secret ban on the use of certain terms “to report events in the North Caucasus”²⁰ – the term *shakhidka*, or female Islamist suicide bomber, is going out of use.

Tables of generalized categories

Traditionally, we analyze intolerant statements based on generalized types and targets of hate language. Above, we described groups of hate language types based on how harsh they are. The targets are grouped as follows:

Natives of Asian countries outside the NIS:

- Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Iraqis
- Arabs (other than Iraqis)

Natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia:

- Tajiks
- Chechens
- Armenians
- Azeris
- Meskhetian Turks
- other ethnicities of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia
- Caucasus natives in general

The target *Asians in and outside the NIS* is equally divided between the two generalized categories above; therefore, the table contains fractions.

The **West** group includes *Americans* and *Western Europeans*.

The **migrants** group is treated separately since the term has multiple meanings, and it is not always possible to distinguish between its ethnic and religious components in a specific text. We treat the target **Jews** separately for the same reason.

The rest of ethnic targets are treated under **Others**:

- Black [African] people
- Ukrainians

¹⁸ ‘Sleduiushchaia ostanovka – terror’, *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 1 October 2007.

¹⁹ Evgenia Suprychova, ‘Kak ia byla gastarbaiterom v Moskve’, *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, 19 September 2007.

²⁰ ‘Tsenzura ili etika? Gosudarstvennomu TV – gosudarstvennuu politkorrektnost’, *Natsionalizm i ksenofobiia*, SOVA Center website, 9 November 2005 (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/213716E/21398CB/659A02B>).

- Russians
- Roma
- Other ethnic categories
- Indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia

All targets defined by religion are included under **religious groups**.

Absolute aggregate values

	Natives of Asian countries outside the NIS	Natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia	West	Jews	Others	Religious groups	Migrants	Total
Harsh	3	2	0	1	13	6	4	29
Medium	5	24	5	1	13	19	10	77
Mild	17	88	31	12	67	40	16	271
Total	25	114	36	14	93	65	30	377

In percentages by type

	Natives of Asian countries outside the NIS	Natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia	West	Jews	Others	Religious groups	Migrants	Total
Harsh	10.34	6.9	0	3.45	44.83	20.69	13.79	100
Medium	6.49	31.17	6.49	1.3	16.88	24.68	12.99	100
Mild	6.27	32.47	11.44	4.43	24.72	14.76	5.904	100
Total	6.63	30.2	9.55	3.71	24.7	17.2	7.96	100

In percentages by target

	Natives of Asian countries outside the NIS	Natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia	West	Jews	Others	Religious groups	Migrants	Total
Harsh	12	1.75	0	7.14	13.98	9.231	13.33	7.69
Medium	20	21.05	13.89	7.14	13.98	29.23	33.33	20.42
Mild	68	77.19	86.11	85.71	72.04	61.54	53.33	71.88
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The tables above reveal the degree of hostility against relatively homogeneous groups of targets.

In general proportions of different hate language types throughout the monitoring phases are as follows:

Hate language intensity, by year, in %²¹

%	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Harsh	10	11.61	11.31	12.63	10.71	18.72	7.69
Medium	40	22.19	19.21	20.53	17.86	32.95	20.42
Mild	49	66.2	69.48	66.84	71.43	48.33	71.88

We observe only minor variations by year, with the exception of the unusual statistics in 2006. The only visible trend is the aforementioned drop in harsher hate language.

We suspect though, that the dramatic drop in hate language intensity between 2006 and 2007 had nothing to do with tolerance in Russian society.

²¹ The total number of negative statements accepted without disapproval is 100%.

Firstly, in the run-up to elections, access to mass media was often denied to non-mainstream politicians, including those prone to xenophobic slogans, and secondly, media were probably scared of potential sanctions for extremism.²²

Aggregate targets, by year²³

%	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Natives of Asian countries outside the NIS	9.74	12.39	4.21	8.16	3.7	6.63
Natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia	40.36	31.60	54.74	37.24	48.26	30.2
West	11.89	10.77	3.68	7.14	3.19	9.55
Jews	4.87	7.45	1.05	4.59	1.31	3.71
Others	22.85	29.44	12.11	31.63	23.51	24.7
Religious groups	10.30	8.35	24.21	11.22	7.55	17.2
Migrants	-	-	-	-	12.48	7.96

As we can see, the trends vary within each group, and the 2007 statistics are different from those of other years, although we see some similarities with 2003 and 2005, i.e. run-ups to earlier federal and Moscow city elections.

Despite the fluctuations across all years, *natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia* top the list every time, due, of course, to *Caucasophobia*. It is worth noting that, in this period, the percentage for this category is the lowest since the project began.

It is important to note that, until 2005, natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia were targeted by harsher hate language more often than any other group. Following the 2005 riots in a Paris suburb – reported by the Russian media from a racist, rather than a social perspective – anti-migrant rhetoric ensured that more

²² See details of unwarranted anti-extremist sanctions against mass media in Galina Kozhevnikova, Autumn 2007: Nazi Raids, Russian Marches, and Putin as Schtirnitz, *Natsionalizm i ksenofobiia*, SOVA Center website (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA2468/6BB4208/A886251#r4>).

²³ 2001 is excluded from the comparison, because the grouping of generalized targets was different.

than half (52%) of harsher hate language was directed against the target *others*. From that moment on, the proportion of hate language targeted against *others* and *migrants* began to exceed (and substantially) that targeted against *natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia* and *natives of Asia outside the NIS*:

Harsher forms of hate language, by target, by year

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia and natives of Asia outside the NIS	61.29	52.38	50	33.34	37.98	17.24
Others and migrants	24.19	30.16	25	52.38	52.72	58.6

The category *others* comes second since 2005 due to stronger emphasis on *indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia*.

Attitudes to other *aliens* vary depending on the situation. For example, *religious groups* were targeted more often than others in 2004 after Beslan (mostly with anti-Islamic rhetoric), and today their share of attacks (16.5%) is due to the Penza recluses' crisis.

Hate Language in the run-up to elections

In tandem with our standard monitoring, we carried out a separate study of hate language in the context of election campaigning, both in the media selected for the broader monitoring, and beyond.

We mostly used the same headings as in our study of the hate language in the run-up to the 2003 parliamentary elections, but where the statistics were insignificant, we dropped the headings.

Our broader, standard monitoring revealed just 32 election campaign-related publications containing hate language, out of a total of 356 hate language cases (i.e. hate language specifically related to the elections accounted for 8.99% of all documented cases). Back in 2003, the proportion of election campaign hate language was higher – 12.15% of all entries.²⁴ However, a significant difference was that the Communist Party mouthpiece *Sovetskaia Rossiia* was monitored in 2003, but not in 2007.

²⁴ The findings of the federal monitoring, without a regional component.

Articles relevant to the elections	Support	Neutral	Aggregate	Disapprove	Total
2007	12	11	23	9	32
2003	47	19	66	31	97

The share of disapproval concerning hate language in the run-up to the elections is about the same: 28.1% in 2007 vs. 26.77% in 2003.

We conclude that in 2007, as in 2003, intolerant statements related to the election campaign did not contribute substantially to the overall level of media hostility.

Hate Language in the media in the run-up to the elections²⁵

	Support		Neutral		Disapprove		Total	
	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007
HL is used by a candidate or a member of a political party	38	5	13	3	23	4	74	13
HL is used against a candidate or a member of a political party	7	0	0	0	4	0	11	0
A candidate or a party member is mentioned in association with HL	9	2	3	2	5	4	17	8
The media report is about the forthcoming elections, but does not mention any candidates or party members	19	6	5	6	4	3	28	15
Total	73	13	21	11	36	11	130	35

We can observe from the table above that candidates and party members significantly reduced their use of hate language: their speech accounted for over

²⁵ Since more than one item could be included under one heading, the total exceeds the overall number of materials.

half of all campaign-related hate language in 2003, while in 2007 it accounted for slightly more than one third. The growth rate of hate language followed the same general trajectory in both years, rising steadily and peaking just before the election.

Hate Language rates in the run-up to the elections

	September	October	November	1–7 December
2003	1	22	34	12
2007	3	12	16	–

The low absolute figures were due to less campaigning in 2007 as compared to 2003: the overwhelmingly dominant United Russia Party simply did not need to rely on the voters' xenophobic sentiments, whilst other parties and candidates either stayed away from campaigning altogether, or avoided the government-controlled media.

Where it was possible to determine the party affiliation of the hate language source, we found that in nine cases the source was United Russia, in three cases the LDPR, in three cases right-wing radicals – the People's Union (*Narodnyi soyuz*) and the Russian Patriots party (*Patrioty Rossii*) – in two cases from A Just Russia (*Spravedlivaia Rossiia*) and in one case from the Union of Right Forces (*Soiuz pravyykh sil*). The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) hardly appealed to xenophobic sentiments at all, in sharp contrast to their 2003 campaign.

Surprisingly, in 2007 journalists disapproved of three out of nine intolerant statements made by United Russia members, while in 2003 they had only disapproved of one United Russia hate statement out of nine.

The numbers are too small for quantitative analysis, so we can only report that politicians, including members of the 'ruling party', used hate language against a range of targets, the top three triggers being migrantophobia, hostility towards the West (such as rants about "Europe's excessive materialism" [lack of spirituality, *bezdukhovnost'*]), and indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia.

Black [African] people came fourth on the list of hate language targets; in this case, as a variation of anti-migrant rhetoric, as with statements made against Arabs. Most racist statements were made by writer Anatoly Gladilin, who shared his perspective on immigration in France in the context of the Russian elections, reiterating the racist theory of the 2005 Paris riots and verbally attacking French nationals of African origin.

The only anti-Russian statement was voiced by a United Russia member, Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, who expressed disapproval of mixed Russian-Chechen marriages in a press interview.

The Liberal-Democratic Party (LDPR), in 2007 as in 2003, once again campaigned to “protect the Russian people”. This time, they abandoned their 2003 slogan *We Are for the Poor, We Are for the Russians* – which, reportedly, had seriously undermined their reputation in Russia’s ethnic republics – replacing it by *Good for Russians, Good for All*. We did not consider the new slogan to be hate language, but the rest of their campaign content remained unchanged. Specifically, an issue of the LDPR newspaper featured a keynote article by Vladimir Zhirinovskii entitled *Russian Power* and containing a series of discriminatory statements (including the slogan *We Are for the Poor, We Are for the Russians*) and references to xenophobic myths.

We note, however, that Zhirinovskii’s 2007 campaign had clearly been designed to appeal to diverse audiences. As a result, their campaign messages were inconsistent and often contradictory: for example, their newspaper *Zhirinovskii’s Time* (*Vremia Zhirinovskogo*) published a surprisingly sober and rational article by the LDPR leader about the need to revise Russia’s immigration policies to facilitate the integration of immigrants, whose contribution is vital for Russia, and help them develop the identity of Russian citizens.²⁶ This reasonable article, though, was buried within the newspaper, while the front page featured the slogan *We’re Running for the Duma to Give Russia back to the Russians*, and a host of ethnocentric quotations.

Xenophobic verbal attacks targeted the opposition party Union of Right Forces (SPS)²⁷ in the run-up to the elections (reminding us of a similar practice of using ‘anti-fascist’ rhetoric to discredit political protesters). Specifically, an article in *Tvoi Den’* alleged that SPS campaigners were “illegal foreigners,” some of them “with a criminal history,” concluding: “like SPS candidates – like their campaigners.”²⁸

And finally, we can see that – compared to our findings in the broader monitoring – hate language associated with election campaigning tends towards harsher forms.

²⁶ ‘Dlia russkikh ne byvaet chuzikh detei’, *Vremia Zhirinovskogo*, 29 October 2007.

²⁷ We are not analyzing the media campaign to discredit SPS in the run-up to the elections, because it lies outside the scope of our research.

²⁸ Anton Stepanov, ‘Kriminal’ny vybor SPS’, *Tvoi Den’*, 30 November 2007.

	Harsh	%	Medium	%	Mild	%	Total
Total over the period	29	7.69	77	20.42	271	71.88	377
In the run-up to elections	12	24	15	30	23	46	50

The Presidential Election Campaign

Summary Findings

The monitoring phase between 2 December 2007 and 1 March 2008 corresponded to the presidential campaign. The lengthy winter holidays and a carefully cleansed information space during the run-up to the presidential election resulted in findings which radically differed from what we have observed before for many years during the same period in autumn. We have reason to believe that by now, after the elections, the usual pattern has returned; our next monitoring round in the autumn of 2008 will show whether or not this is the case.

A total of 202 entries were made over the three months of monitoring, and the summary findings look as follows:

Position of the author	Support	%	Neutral	%	Disapprove	%	Total
Total items:	135	66.83	52	25.74	15	7.43	202
including discussion of the HL	1	0	0	0	3	0	4

As opposed to the parliamentary phase, a downward trend was observed during the presidential campaign, taking into account almost two weeks of mass media silence in January:

Month	1st month	2nd month	3d month
Parliamentary campaign (autumn 2007)	91	128	136
Presidential campaign (winter 2007–2008)	80	48	73

Furthermore, researchers who conducted the monitoring shared a subjective impression that as the presidential elections approached, media reports progressively lost any substance or emotion, and were reduced to “good news in a period of stability.” The only discordant note was the Penza recluses’ story, keeping the public interested through February. During the run-up to the presidential elections, 20 of the 202 intolerant statements were about the Penza recluses.

The rates of disapproval of hate language dropped to one third of that observed during the run-up to the parliamentary elections: from 19.5% to 6.5%, the lowest observed throughout the entire period of our research.

Types of Hate Language

In the run-up to the presidential elections, hate language, if not massive, was rather diverse: of the 17 hate language types described above just one was not observed, namely *quoting radical xenophobic statements and texts without comment*.

Absolute Values

HL Type:	Support	Neutral	Aggre- gate	Disap- prove	Total
Mention in a humiliating or offensive context	77	27	104	1	105
Allege moral deficiency	29	7	36	0	36
Allege inherent criminality of a group	14	0	14	0	14
Create a negative image of a group	6	7	13	2	15
Allege inferiority	8	5	13	0	13
Allege disproportional superiority of a certain ethnic or religious group	7	1	8	3	11
Accuse of negative influence	8	0	8	0	8
Accuse a group of attempts to seize power or territory	3	3	6	3	9
Veiled calls to violence and discrimination	3	1	4	4	8

HL Type:	Support	Neutral	Aggre- gate	Disap- prove	Total
Appeal to prevent settlement in a region	2	1	3	2	5
Denial of nationality	1	1	2	0	2
Call to violence	1	0	1	2	3
Call to discrimination	1	0	1	1	2
Allege historical crimes of a group	1	0	1	0	1
Justify historical violence and discrimination	0	1	1	0	1
Publications and statements questioning historically established facts of violence and discrimination	0	0	0	1	1
Total	161	54	215	19	234

Percentages

HL Type:	Support	Neutral	Aggre- gate	Disap- prove	Total
Mention in a humiliating or offensive context	47.83	50	48.37	5.26	44.87
Allege moral deficiency	18.01	13	16.74	0	15.38
Allege inherent criminality of a group	8.7	0	6.51	0	5.98
Create a negative image of a group	3.73	13	6.05	10.53	6.41
Allege inferiority	4.97	9.26	6.05	0	5.56
Allege disproportional superiority of a certain ethnic or religious group	4.35	1.85	3.72	15.79	4.70
Accuse of negative influence	4.97	0	3.72	0	3.42

HL Type:	Support	Neutral	Aggre- gate	Disap- prove	Total
Accuse a group of attempts to seize power or territory	1.86	5.56	2.79	15.79	3.85
Veiled calls to violence and discrimination	1.86	1.85	1.86	21.05	3.42
Appeal to prevent settlement in a region	1.24	1.85	1.39	10.53	2.14
Denial of nationality	0.62	1.85	0.93	0	0.85
Call to violence	0.62	0	0.47	10.53	1.28
Call to discrimination	0.62	0	0.47	5.26	0.85
Allege historical crimes of a group	0.62	0	0.47	0	0.4
Justify historical violence and discrimination	0	1.85	0.47	0	0.43
Publications and statements questioning historically established facts of violence and discrimination	0	0	0	5.26	0.43
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The top four were the same as before the parliamentary elections, but two items – *alleging inherent criminality of a group* and *creating a negative image* – swapped places.

Almost half of all hate language was *mention in a negative context*, reaching the highest level ever observed in our monitoring for this type. It may be related to the season's holidays: the number of features (interviews, analytical reports, debates, etc.) decreased, while news reporting (including crime reports) continued to be published at the same rate or even higher.

Targets of Hate Language

At this phase, we did not observe any intolerant statements against *Iraqis, Arabs, Meskhetian Turks, Orthodox Christians, Catholics and Uniates*, and *other religious groups*.

Absolute Values

HL Target	Support	Neutral	Aggre- gate	Disap- prove	Total
Migrants	20	6	26	1	27
New and small religious groups	16	4	20	0	20
Caucasus natives in general	14	5	19	0	19
Indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia	9	2	11	7	18
Other ethnic categories	10	6	16	0	16
Tajiks	10	2	12	0	12
Western Europeans	9	2	11	1	12
Other ethnicities of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (other than Chechens, Armenians and Azeris)	9	2	11	0	11
Americans	8	2	10	0	10
Asians (in or outside the NIS, other than those explicitly mentioned)	5	4	9	0	9
Roma	6	3	9	0	9
Ukrainians	7	1	8	0	8
Jews	0	2	2	6	8
Chechens	3	4	7	0	7
Chinese	6	1	7	0	7
Russians	4	3	7	0	7
Azeris	3	3	6	1	7
Muslims	3	2	5	1	6
Black [African] people	5	0	5	0	5
Vietnamese	3	0	3	0	3
Armenians	1	1	2	0	2
Indiscriminate religious xenophobia	0	0	0	1	1
Total	151	55	206	18	224

Percentages

HL Target:	Support	Neutral	Aggregate	Disapprove	Total
Migrants	13.25	10.91	12.62	5.56	12.05
New and small religious groups	10.6	7.27	9.71	0	8.93
Caucasus natives in general	9.27	9.09	9.22	0	8.48
Indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia	5.96	3.64	5.34	38.9	8.04
Other ethnic categories	6.62	10.91	7.77	0	7.14
Tajiks	6.62	3.64	5.82	0	5.36
Other ethnicities of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (other than Chechens, Armenians and Azeris)	5.96	3.64	5.34	5.56	5.36
Western Europeans	5.96	3.64	5.34	0	4.91
Americans	5.3	3.64	4.85	0	4.46
Asians (in or outside the NIS, other than those explicitly mentioned)	3.31	7.27	4.37	0	4.02
Roma	3.97	5.45	4.37	0	4.02
Ukrainians	4.64	1.82	3.88	0	3.57
Armenians	0.66	3.64	0.97	33.3	3.57
Chechens	1.99	7.27	3.4	0	3.12
Chinese	3.97	1.82	3.4	0	3.12
Russians	2.65	5.45	3.4	0	3.12
Azeris	1.99	5.45	2.91	5.56	3.12
Muslims	1.99	3.64	2.43	5.56	2.68
Black [African] people	3.31	0	2.43	0	2.23
Vietnamese	1.99	0	1.46	0	1.34
Jews	0	1.82	0.97	0	0.89
Indiscriminate religious xenophobia	0	0	0	5.56	0.45
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The distribution of hate language targets changed somewhat, but the top few remained the same, only swapped positions. Notably, *migrants* top the list for the first time. Not surprisingly, *new religious groups* come second; given the virtual lack of news following the Duma elections, before and after the New Year holidays, *Tvoi Den'* and *Moskovskii Komsomolets* maintained their focus on the Penza recluses, and the journalists used them as a pretext to rant on about the "harm caused by sects" in general.

As a common trait of election campaigns (as seen from our 2003-04²⁹ and 2007 findings), top hate targets are limited to those which, from a politician's perspective, may be dissociated from Russian voters. The targets include *migrants*, some abstract *natives of the Caucasus* (one can always assume nationals of Transcaucasia), and equally abstract *non-Russians*, plus a small, by definition, group of *sectarians* and *other ethnic categories*, which this time includes people from the Baltic countries, Moldova, Brazil, and Kosovo.

Disapproval of hate language was low. In this phase, journalists mainly disapproved of verbal attacks against *Jews* and abstract *non-Russians* – six and seven, respectively, of the 18 publications disapproving of hate language. Admittedly, the disapproval (just as in our autumn findings) is only found in certain media reports which quote racist statement to illustrate the problem of xenophobia – for example, in reports about a criminal verdict against Boris Mironov, a known antisemite, or in an article about xenophobia in Russian schools.

Hate Language aggregate tables

Type/target table

The table is based on aggregate values, i.e. it includes those statements which elicit *supportive* or *neutral* attitudes in journalists. Lines and columns with zero values have been deleted.

A few targets are not included: *indiscriminate religious xenophobia*, *other religious categories*, *Catholics (and Uniates)*, *Orthodox Christians*, *Meskhethian Turks*, *Arabs*, and *Iraqis*.

This time, we did not find certain hate language types, namely, *questioning historically established facts of violence and discrimination* and *quoting radical xenophobic statements and texts without any comments*.

As in the tables above, we highlight values higher than 5.

²⁹ See: G. Kozhevnikova, *Hate Language in Election Campaigns and Beyond...* pp. 59–61.

A	B	C	D	E	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	Total
New and small religious groups															
0	0	0	2	0	3	0	3	4	0	6	10	0	0	0	28
Muslims															
0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	5
Indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia															
0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	3	1	0	1	13
Other ethnic categories															
0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	11	0	2	0	18
Asians (in or outside the NIS, other than those explicitly mentioned)															
0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	5	0	1	0	11
Caucasus natives in general															
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	0	15	0	1	0	23
Other ethnicities of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (other than Chechens, Armenians and Azeris)															
0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	11
Azeris															
0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	7
Armenians															
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Chechens															
0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	8
Vietnamese															
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	4

A	B	C	D	E	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	Total
Chinese															
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	1	1	0	8
Tajiks															
1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	7	0	1	0	13
Roma															
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	9
Russians															
0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	7
Ukrainians															
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	8
Jews															
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Western Europeans															
0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	6	0	1	5	0	0	0	14
Americans															
0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	6	0	1	1	0	0	0	13
Black [African] people															
0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	6
Migrants															
0	0	2	3	0	0	0	7	4	3	0	10	1	2	0	32
Total															
1	1	8	14	1	13	2	17	41	9	11	111	3	9	2	243

In the winter of 2008, we found the same stereotypes we have observed in the mass media over many years. If you choose to believe the Russian press, you will learn that *migrants* are inherently criminal, *Americans* and *Western Europeans* are materialistic double-dealers, and crime reports feature everyone but ethnic *Russians*, who are apparently too busy drinking.

The stereotype of criminal migrants is partially based on misunderstanding and inaccurate reporting of police statements – even though law enforcement agents are not always consistent. For example, see below extracts from two interviews on the same subject given by the Chief of Moscow police, Vladimir Pronin, to two different papers and published two days apart:

18 February 2008, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*

Reporter (R): *Many Muscovites are convinced that visitors and migrants commit most of the crimes in Moscow. Is this true?*

Pronin (P): Moscow does not need so many migrants, it is true. Of those who come [to Moscow], just about one third get a formal job.... As a result, 43% – i.e. around 35,000 – of all solved crimes were committed by newcomers last year. Moreover, the number of offenses committed by non-residents in Moscow is growing. Last year, for example, migrants committed more than 300 serious crimes.

R: *Some people say that natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia commit most of the crimes, [is this true]?*

P: Not at all! Most crimes are committed by visitors from nearby Russian regions... A fellow has served in prison 10–15 years, comes back home, no job, the [local] factory has closed; his parents live on subsistence farming. He doesn't want to plant potatoes any more, so he goes to Moscow...³⁰

A reader of *Izvestiia* who has not read *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* will never know that 14,161 crimes is not 43%, but 2.5 times less. The *Izvestiia* reporter

20 February 2008, *Izvestiia*

“Numbers are stubborn things: almost 43% crimes in Moscow are committed by ‘aliens’.

In 2007, nationals of neighboring [former USSR] countries committed 14,161 crimes in Moscow – 2% more than last year, according to the police chief...At the same time, newcomers from neighboring countries were affected by 5,439 crimes over the same period (by the way, many crimes – about 1,000 – targeted nationals of Uzbekistan).

This proportion, according to Pronin, is significant, and the angry ethnic diasporas should see the log in their own eye, not just the speck in another's.”³¹

³⁰ Nikita Mironov, ‘Dlia nas glavnoe – zashchitit’ grazhdan v liubykh situatsiakh....’

³¹ Natalia Davydova, ‘Seichas ne do Navruza!’, *Izvestiia*, 20 February 2008.

paraphrases General Pronin's words and, in quoting the 43%, transforms non-Muscovites into foreigners. In *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, General Pronin clearly dispels the ethnic stereotype, but it is unclear from *Izvestiia's* interpretation what exactly the General said and how much weight he attached to the culprit's ethnicity, and where, on the other hand, the reporter's lack of professionalism and personal bias played a role.

Tables of generalized categories

Absolute Values

	Natives of Asian countries outside the NIS	Natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia	West	Jews	Others	Religious groups	Migrants	Total
Harsh	1.5	3.5	0	0	5	0	3	13
Medium	3.5	11.5	4	0	9	11	12	51
Mild	12.5	55.5	23	2	47	22	17	179
Total	17.5	70.5	27	2	61	33	32	243

In percentages by type

	Natives of Asian countries outside the NIS	Natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia	West	Jews	Others	Religious groups	Migrants	Total
Harsh	11.5	26.9	0	0	38.5	0	23.1	100
Medium	6.86	22.55	7.84	0	17.65	21.57	23.53	100
Mild	6.98	31.01	12.85	1.12	26.26	12.29	9.50	100
Total	7.20	29.01	11.11	0.82	25.1	13.58	13.17	100

In percentages by target

	Natives of Asian countries outside the NIS	Natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia	West	Jews	Others	Religious groups	Migrants	Total
Harsh	8.57	4.96	0	0	8.2	0	9.38	5.35
Medium	20	16.31	14.81	0	14.75	33.33	37.5	20.99
Mild	71.43	78.72	85.19	100	77.05	66.67	53.13	73.66
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

We observed a further drop in harsher forms of hate language: from 7.69% of all statements in the autumn of 2007 to just 5.35%, the lowest ever since the beginning of our research. Possible reasons, as we suggested above, may include fear of repression; the media attention focused almost exclusively on United Russia, V. Putin and D. Medvedev; lack of alternative perspectives in media reports; and ‘festive’ sentiments.

It is clear, however, that different types of hate language have changed focus since the autumn campaign: while in the autumn of 2007 harsher statements related to *indiscriminate ethnic xenophobia* and *sects*, since then negative attitudes towards various religious groups have been mostly expressed through defamation, while harsher hate language has targeted *migrants* (increase from 14% to 23%) and *natives of the Caucasus and Central Asia* (increase from 6.9% to 26.9%).

Hate Language in the run-up to elections

During the presidential campaign, the overall amount of publications relevant to the elections and containing hate language dropped even further in comparison with the parliamentary campaign. In fact, there was hardly any campaigning or debates in the press.

Articles relevant to the elections	Support	Neutral	Aggregate	Disapprove	Total
2008	8	2	10	5	15
2007	12	11	23	9	32
2003	47	19	66	31	97

As for presidential candidates, only the KPRF leader Gennadii Ziuganov made intolerant statements during his presidential campaign, tentatively adopting the Russian nationalist role which the KPRF had avoided in its parliamentary campaign. To achieve this, Gennadii Ziuganov just slightly modified his five-year-old campaign messages.

Year 2003

Gennadii Ziuganov, Power is Responsibility for the Country

“Russians as a people are on the verge of disaster. They die out faster... Evidently, the current authorities are afraid of the Russian spirit, the Russian will, the ability to brace up and face the challenge. This is why [ethnic] Russians are being squeezed out of the key spheres, such as business, finance, governance, and the mass media.”³²

Year 2008

Gennadii Ziuganov, Russians Bear Particular Responsibility for the Country.

“However, even in Russia a war is waged against [ethnic] Russians to suppress them. Russophobia is oozing out of all pores of the current government. Russians are being squeezed out of the key spheres, such as governance, communication, finance, and trade. Very often, you do not see a single [ethnic] Russian face there. The official television is explicitly Russophobe.”³³

Campaigning was not particularly active outside the mass media either. Even in the run-up to the parliamentary elections the political parties (except United Russia) were not very active in disseminating their campaign materials, but during the presidential campaign in winter they were making hardly any effort at all, apparently due to the predetermined outcome of the elections. All presidential candidates appeared to be going through the motions and did not even pretend to be equal competitors in the presidential race.

³² Gennadii Ziuganov, ‘Vlast’ – eto otvetstvennost’ za stranu: Vstrechi Ziuganova s izbirateliami Podmoskov’ia’, *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 12 August 2003.

³³ Gennadii Ziuganov, ‘Na russkikh lezhit osobaia otvetstvennost’ za stranu’, *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 20 February 2008.

Only the KPRF and LDPR leaders were visible in the campaign due to their xenophobic statements.

Touring the country, Gennadii Ziuganov reiterated his concern about the “dominance of non-Russians”,³⁴ and at least one campaign-related issue of *Pravda* repeated the statement.³⁵

Vladimir Zhirinovskii, apparently to spite the Communist Ziuganov, argued that there was no such thing as “friendship of the peoples” in Soviet times, and engaged in political ranting to mask his dislike of Transcaucasian ethnicities: “*After all, even the Soviet Union was destroyed by the South; there was always a gray, shadow economy there. I have been there, personally, I have lived there, seen it all. ... There was no government, total corruption, no one studied Marxism there, no one worked. ... [only ethnic] Russians worked. [There are] no Russians [there now]; where is the plant, the Kutaisi Automobile Plant, where is it?*”³⁶

But most voters and observers failed to notice any of it. We can say that it was the least noticeable election campaign in the history of post-Soviet Russia.

From Statistics to Content

It is not accidental that some publications are mentioned above more often than others. It corresponds to the amount of hate language found on their pages during our monitoring.

Of the print media, *Moskovskii Komsomolets* and *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* were absolute ‘leaders’ in terms of hate language in autumn – 83 and 79 entries in the database of aggregate indicators (28.8 and 28.3% of the print publications) respectively (for the first time since 2003 KP does not top the list), followed by *Izvestiia* (24/8.3%), *Tvoi Den'* (19/6.6%), and *Argumenty i Fakty* (17/5.9%). It is not always possible to compare print media with TV programs due to tougher governmental control over the latter, and simply because the amounts of text are substantially different; in autumn, the TV programs most prone to

³⁴ See, for example, ‘Kandidat v prezidenty Rossii Gennadii Ziuganov: Na russkom narode lezhit osobaia otvetstvennost' za budushchee nashei strany’, The website of the Novosibirsk Chapter of KPRF, 10 February 2008 (http://kprfnsk.ru/inform/news/2786_zhuganov_president/).

³⁵ ‘Na russkikh kak gosudarstvobrazuiushchem narode lezhit osobaia otvetstvennost'’, *Pravda*, 12–15 February 2008 (<http://www.gazeta-pravda.ru/pravda/pravda%20015.html>).

³⁶ Cited from: Press Conference at *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, LDPR official website, [February]2008 (http://www.ldpr.ru/leader/smi_o_lidere/2135/).

hate language included Postscriptum (5 incidents recorded) and *Russkii Vzgliad* (3 incidents).³⁷

In winter, the publications most susceptible to using hate language included *MK* (aggregate indicator – 76 entries, 40.6%, the highest ever in our monitoring); *KP* (38/20.3%, aggregate), *Tvoi Den'* (35/18.7%), and *Literaturnaia Gazeta* (14/7.5%). In contrast, TV programs used no hate language: apparently, the degree of governmental control over broadcasting was at its maximum in the run-up to the presidential elections, and the TV shows were completely devoid of any controversy.

The share of hate language in TV shows in % of the monitored print and broadcast media total

HL on TV	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total	13.1	5.1	15.5	13.3	2.8	0
Aggregate indicator	11.2	6.3	15.5	12.9	3.4	0

As we have mentioned, journalists tend to disapprove of hate language more often, but their disapproving comments do not necessarily indicate a shift in perspective. For example, four of the nine articles in *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* containing disapproval of hate language were authored by a female journalist who had pretended to be an immigrant from Ukraine looking for a job in Moscow; she was indignant at being called ‘Khokhlushka’, a pejorative term for a Ukrainian, and at Ukraine being called ‘Khokhlandia’. Nonetheless, in this and other reports the same journalist did not think twice about using other xenophobic terms and phrases as offensive as ‘Khokhlandia’.

In *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, disapproval of hate language was in most cases limited to reports of nationalist offenses (such as the Russian March slogans consistently criticized by journalists since 2005; racist language accompanying violent attacks, and discriminatory police practices), i.e. their disapproval was triggered only by extreme incidents.

A total lack of media coverage of the Russian March on 4 November 2007 can be described as large-scale political manipulation. Radical nationalists were rarely given access to the media in 2007 in comparison to 2006 anyway, but the

³⁷ As of late 2006, *Russkii Vzgliad* has been transformed from an analytical program subscribing to Orthodox Christian and anti-American views into a talk show which by the second half of 2007 had lost all political features.

2007 Russian March, a major event in the ‘street policies’ of the period, was completely ignored by most media, including almost all TV channels and major print media such as *Izvestiia*.

Novye Izvestiia, *Gazeta*, *Vremia Novostei*, and *Komsomol’skaia Pravda* published, in our opinion, appropriate reports of the Russian March. *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, *Tvoi Den’* and *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, alongside brief and vague reports (which raised doubts as to whether the authors had actually witnessed the event) the papers focused on political opposition in general and linked the ultra-right to the Other Russia and Boris Berezhovsky.³⁸

During our most recent monitoring phase we found 21 publications which addressed in one way or another the problem of hate language in the mass media, i.e. discussed the journalists’ language and questioned whether xenophobic rhetoric is permissible in the press and in the public arena. 16 such articles were published in the run-up to the parliamentary elections.

Gazeta appeared to be more interested than other papers in discussing the hatred projected by the media, and also the journalism vs. propaganda dilemma. One fourth of all articles discussing hate language were published in *Gazeta*: they referred to the lack of political correctness in the Russian media and the fact that the media’s function had changed from public communication to propaganda relying on negative ethno-religious stereotypes and often linking them to “national security.”³⁹

Komsomol’skaia Pravda published an interesting discussion of *Nasha Rasha*, a TV comedy featuring migrant workers Dzhamsud and Ravshan. The show had triggered a negative reaction of official Tajikistan.⁴⁰ Fortunately, the discussion in *KP* was not limited to the comedy show, but raised broader issues, such as the lack of political correctness and the problem of “ethnic humor” in general, in an appropriate manner and with reasonable arguments.⁴¹

³⁸ Max Fadeikov, ‘Potkin, marsh k Berezhovskomu!’ *Tvoi Den’*, 9 October 2007. Daniil Borisov, ‘Nesoglasie optom i v rozniitsu: V Peterburge proshli srazu dva marsha oppozitsii’, *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 7 November 2007; Egor Kolyvanov, ‘“Russkii marsh” prevratilsia v piknik’, *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 6 November 2007.

³⁹ See, for example, Nadezhda Kevorkova, ‘Maslo kupleno’, *Gazeta*, 4 September 2007; Dmitrii Bal’burov, ‘Zhelanie byt’ patriotom’, *Gazeta*, 7 November 2007.

⁴⁰ ‘Tadzhikskie deputaty protiv “Nashei Russia”’, *Natsionalizm i ksenofobiia*, SOVA Center website. 29 September 2007 (<http://xeno.sova-center.ru/213716E/21398CB/9E5F1CA>).

⁴¹ The pathos of this humorous story lies in the fact that the two Tajik construction workers (who know nothing about building work) appear to be highly educated people who evidently held academic posts in their home country, but due to their life circumstances have to earn a living in Russia performing unskilled work they are not trained to do. In Russia, many viewers consider the program offers a positive portrayal of these Tajik migrants. Tajik government officials, however, found it offensive.

We note an article in *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* by Iakov Gilinskii, Director, Center of Deviantology (Sociology of Deviance and Social Control), Institute of Sociology, Russian Academy of Sciences. He discusses the nature of xenophobia and xenophobic political discourse, emphasizing that populist politicians often resort to the tried and true tactics of urging society to search for “internal enemies.” At the moment, he writes, massive grassroots xenophobia readily targets any ‘alien’ as an enemy. In particular, Gilinskii criticizes president Putin and his rhetoric: “In 1999, the slogan about “killing [terrorists] in the toilet” gained massive approval and popular support for the Russian presidential candidate. Admittedly, the slogan led to tens of thousands of casualties on both sides — of Chechens and federal troops.⁴² However, as many people’s favorite song goes, “there is no price we won’t pay”... Today’s populist statements by politicians, the president “throwing in” a term “native population,” proposed bills to introduce immigrant quotas (17–20% of immigrants resident in a region), to prohibit migrants from engaging in certain occupations (trade) etc. cannot but fuel xenophobic, nationalist sentiments, just one step away from hate crimes.”⁴³ Another reason why this article is so important is that United Russia’s hate language was hardly ever criticized in the media during both election campaigns.

Sometimes hate language is a result of mere lack of professionalism. TV critic Konstantin Kovaliov offered a relevant example in *Literaturnaia Gazeta*: “The other day the First Channel aired a news report of insects sent to space to orbit the Earth for research purposes. Then two U.S. astronauts were shown working in open space outside the space station. At this moment a happy voice behind the screen blurted out: “These are the best known cockroaches today!”⁴⁴

Conclusions

As we sum up our hate language monitoring phase seven, we conclude the following.

Contrary to our expectations, the number of documented incidents of hate language did not increase, but instead dropped slightly in comparison with the previous phase. However, the professionalism or tolerance of Russian journalists does not appear to be the reason; rather, intolerance in the mass media is taking new forms. Hate language is disguised as social concerns and refers to

⁴² Putin’s statement about terrorists has often been interpreted as anti-Chechen. See, for example, G. Kozhevnikova, *Hate Language in Election Campaigns and Beyond...*, p. 91.

⁴³ Iakov Gilinskii, ‘Ot tsivilizovannosti k varvarstvu’, *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 14 December 2007.

⁴⁴ Konstantin Kovalev, ‘Zamorozki i zamorochki ekrana’, *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 12 December 2007.

ethno-religious stereotypes established over the recent years without naming them directly. Our current methodology of hate language monitoring has certain limitations and is incapable of revealing the actual level of xenophobia in the Russian mass media. Therefore, our findings presented here correspond to the minimum level of intolerance.

In the run-up to the parliamentary and particularly to the presidential elections, public information was strictly limited, resulting in less campaigning in general and less access to the mass media for non-mainstream, including right-wing radical, candidates and activists. Other factors included the absolute dominance of the “ruling party” in the public arena and the understandable fear of abusive enforcement of anti-extremist legislation in a situation of fuzzy criteria and boundaries.⁴⁵

As a result, most of the earlier observed trends in hate language are distorted. Some of our observations are not comparable with any previous findings and do not match the “xenophobic preferences” reported earlier, even though the pre-election years 2003 and 2005 are closest to the most recent findings.

Most general traits and trends of the hate language continue, including Caucasophobia, fuzziness of targets, and veiled hostility rather than direct attacks. Nothing has changed in the way journalists react to unusual situations: at first, we observe uninformed hysteria in the media, replaced after a while by more reasonable analysis.

The main positive finding is a sharp decline in harsher forms of hate language, even though we are not sure whether this is sustainable and whether or not it is due to censorship. Likewise, we have serious doubts about the other positive development – the reduction in Chechenophobia, since the majority of publications on the Chechen ‘theme’ appear too loyal to the current Chechen leadership.

Unfortunately, it was only under the threat of censorship that some publications agreed to change their policy of mentioning ethnicity in crime reports; however, it is a positive development, particularly for some publications which have adopted a new approach for the long term. On the other hand, publications prone to intolerance show just how easy it is to bypass the ban by suggesting ethnicity indirectly.

Just as in previous years, blame campaigns against Russia’s opponents in the international arena are not limited to political rhetoric. We observed it in the

⁴⁵ See details in: Alexander Verkhovsky, ‘Anti-Extremist Legislation, its Use and Misuse’, in *Xenophobia, Freedom of Conscience and Anti-Extremism in Russia in 2007* (Moscow: SOVA Center, 2008), pp. 45-79

anti-Georgian and anti-Estonian campaigns in previous monitoring periods, and now we see it in the hate language against *Western Europeans*.

As before, political campaigners avoid hate language. During the run-up to the most recent parliamentary elections, hate language in the mass media was similar to that in the autumn of 2003, but virtually no hate language was associated with the presidential campaign. Wherever hate language was used, it did not refer to potential voters, but rather to some abstract targets (*migrants*) or to those who could not be Russian voters by definition (*Western Europeans*).

The media were more accepting of intolerant ethno-religious statements by some candidates than others; unsurprisingly, they were more likely to approve of intolerance voiced by the United Russia Party.

We note the virtual absence of hate language in the regional media monitored, with the exception of Krasnodar Krai’s media, where the overall situation with hate language did not change much between 2001 and 2008, and our observations suggest that the hate language aired by the mass media in Krasnodar is either promoted or condoned by the regional authorities. The same applies to a lesser extent to the Saratov mass media whose attitudes to hate language are directly linked to their relations with United Russia.

This monitoring has shown that media now use ‘anti-fascist’ rhetoric to discredit political opponents to the current regime: back in 2005, this practice emerged in the pro-Kremlin youth movements, then it was adopted by politicians and statespersons, and eventually by the federal and regional mass media. A similar tactic of discrediting political opponents relies on ‘migrantophobia’: the opponents are accused of using “criminal illegal immigrants” for their own purposes.

The above proves that while hate language continues to be a professional problem for the Russian media, it is increasingly employed as propaganda for political ends and is being used to maintain and legitimize the already high level of xenophobia in the Russian society.

Translated by I. Savelieva.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Crime and Punishment Statistics

Statistics of Racist and Neo-Nazi Attacks between 2004 – April 30, 2009¹ (by city)

	2004			2005			2006			2007			2008			2009		
	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims
Total	50	218	268	49	418	467	66	522	588	85	605	690	97	434	531	23	98	121
Including																		
Moscow	18	62	80	16	179	195	40	228	268	49	222	271	57	199	256	13	48	61
St. Petersburg	9	32	41	4	45	49	6	56	62	11	111	122	15	38	53	3	12	15
Abakan	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	1			
Archangelsk	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	7	8	0	5	5	0	4	4
Astrakhan	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Barnaul	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	3	2	5	7	0	0	0			
Belgorod	0	5	5	0	4	4	0	18	18	0	1	1	0	2	2			
Birobidjan	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Blagoveshchensk	0	2	2	0	7	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2			
Bryansk	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	3	0	13	13			
Cheboksary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	2	2			
Chelyabinsk	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	11	11	1	7	8	0	4	4
Chita Oblast	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	3	0	0	0			
Ivanovo	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0			
Izhevsk	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	6	7	0	5	5			
Irkutsk Oblast	3	0	3	2	5	7	0	8	8	1	53	54	0	1	1			
Yoshkar Ola	0	1	1	0	15	15	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0			

¹ The cities are arranged in alphabetic order, except Moscow and St. Petersburg – two major centers of racist violence.

	2004			2005			2006			2007			2008			2009		
	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims
Kazan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8	0	1	1	0	9	9			
Kaliningrad	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	11	11	0	1	1	0	10	10	1	2	3
Kaluga	0	0	0	0	11	11	1	4	5	2	1	3	2	2	4			
Kemerovo oblast ⁷	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Khabarovsk	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4			
Kirov	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Kostroma	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	1
Krasnodar	2	32	34	1	3	4	0	7	7	0	11	11	1	1	2			
Krasnoyarsk	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	3	3	0	3	3	1	1	2			
Kurgan	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2			
Kursk	0	5	5	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Lipetsk	0	1	1	0	3	3	1	0	1	0	3	3	0	3	3			
Maikop	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1			
Murmansk	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	5	5	0	0	0			
Nizhny Novgorod	1	5	6	4	12	16	0	36	36	1	41	42	2	12	14	2	6	8
Novgorod	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2			
Novosibirsk	2	12	14	1	9	10	0	9	9	1	5	6	2	6	8	1	6	7
Omsk Oblast	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	3	4	1	2	3	0	2	2			
Oryol	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	9	9	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	5	5
Orenburg	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	0	0			
Penza	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	14	14			
Perm	0	1	1	3	2	5	0	1	1	0	3	3	2	3	5			
Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0			
Petrozavodsk	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Pskov	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			

	2004			2005			2006			2007			2008			2009		
	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Total victims
Rostov-on-the-Don	0	0	0	0	10	10	0	2	2	1	7	8	0	4	4			
Ryazan	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	4	0	6	6	0	9	9	1	0	1
Samara	1	3	4	4	5	9	0	2	2	2	9	11	0	2	2			
Saratov	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	4	8	2	4	6	0	0	0			
Sverdlovsk Oblast	1	7	8	6	6	12	0	6	6	3	17	20	4	16	20	0	1	1
Smolensk	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Stavropol	0	0	0	0	21	21	0	1	1	1	8	9	3	10	13			
Syktvykar	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Tambov	0	3	3	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2
Tver Oblast	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	7	9	0	2	2	0	0	0			
Tomsk	0	3	3	0	6	6	0	4	4	0	5	5	0	0	0			
Tula Oblast	1	0	1	0	3	3	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	3	4			
Tyumen Oblast	3	1	4	1	0	1	0	15	15	0	0	0	0	3	3			
Ulan Ude	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0			
Ul'yanovsk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	0	1
Ufa	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	4	4			
Vladivostok	5	9	14	0	3	3	2	18	20	1	3	4	0	4	4			
Vladimir Oblast	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	6	6			
Volgograd	0	2	2	0	1	1	2	9	11	1	5	6	0	4	4			
Vologda	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	3	0	1	1			
Voronezh	1	2	3	1	21	22	1	6	7	0	16	16	2	18	20			
Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Yaroslavl Oblast	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	7	0	3	3	0	1	1	0	2	2
Yakutia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0			

Consolidates Statistics of Racist and Neo-Nazi Attacks in 2004 - April 30, 2009 (by category)²

	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009	
	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded
Total	50	218	49	418	66	522	85	605	97	434	23	98
Including												
Dark-skinned people	1	33	3	38	2	32	0	37	2	22	1	14
People from Central Asia	10	23	18	34	17	60	30	81	49	110	14	19
People from the Caucasus	15	38	12	52	15	72	25	57	23	72	5	14
People from the Middle East and North Africa	4	12	1	22	0	11	1	21	1	12	0	3
People from Asia-Pacific Region (China, Viet-Nam, Mongolia, etc.)	8	29	4	58	4	52	2	43	1	34	3	3
Other people of "non-Slav appearance"	2	22	3	72	4	69	20	87	12	38	0	22
Members of youth subcultures and leftist youth	0	4	3	121	3	119	5	193	3	76	0	21
Others (including ethnic Russians), or not known	10	57	5	21	21	107	2	86	6	70	0	2

² This table reflects not the "actual identity" of victims, but rather the identity given to them by the attackers. In other words, if a Slavic person was taken for a Caucasian, he would be registered in the category "people from the Caucasus".

We also know about attacks on homeless people committed, as police suspects, with ideological motivation. In 2004 we have reports about 13 murders of this kind, in 2005 – about 5 murders and 4 beatings, in 2006 – 7 murders and 4 beatings, in 2007 – 4 murders and not less than 2 beatings, in 2008 – 7 murders and 1 beating.

Statistics of convictions for violent crimes with a recognized hate motive in 2004 – April 30, 2009

	Number of convictions	Number of offenders convicted	Including probational sentences or release from punishment
2004			
Moscow	4	11	not known
St. Petersburg	2	10	4
Novgorod	1 ³	1	0
Vladimir Oblast	1	1	1
Voronezh	1	3	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>5</i>
2005			
Moscow	2	4	0
Moscow Oblast	4 ⁴	14	0
St. Petersburg	2	10	4 ⁵
Blagoveshchensk	1	4	0
Lipetsk	1 ⁶	4	0
Murmansk	1	2	1
Perm	1	1	0
Tambov	1	1	0
Tyumen Oblast	1	5	0
Vladivostok	1	1	0
Volgograd	1	7	0
Yekaterinburg	1	3	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>5</i>
2006			
Moscow	5	11	1
Moscow Oblast	3	18	4
St. Petersburg	3	10	4
Altai Krai	1	1	1
Belgorod	1	11	1

³ For threats to blow up a synagogue.

⁴ We are not sure of the exact date of one sentence for a killing motivated by ethnic hatred; we assume that it occurred in 2005.

⁵ Another one was acquitted for lack of evidence

⁶ With a judicial determination addressed to the City Administration.

	Number of convictions	Number of offenders convicted	Including probational sentences or release from punishment
Jewish Autonomous Oblast	1	3	0
Kaluga Oblast	1	2	0
Kostroma	2	7	5
Nizhny Novgorod	4	6	not known
Novosibirsk	1	not known	not known
Oryol	2	6 ⁷	2
Rostov-on-the-Don	1	2	0
Saratov	1	5	0
Tomsk	1	3	0
Ufa	1	3	3
Voronezh	1	13	7
Yekaterinburg	3	8 ⁸	0
Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk	1	1	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>109⁹</i>	<i>24¹⁰</i>
2007			
Moscow	4	11	0
St. Petersburg	2	11	3
Belgorod	1	2	0
Kaluga	1	3	2
Krasnoyarsk	1	2	1
Leningrad Oblast	1	1	0
Nizhny Novgorod	1	9	9
Omsk	1	1	0
North Ossetia	1	1	0
Stavropol	2	2	0
Syktyvkar	1	1	0
Tambov	1	1	0
Tumen	1	6	2
Voronezh	1	4	0

⁷ Estimated minimum; in one case, it is only known that a sentence has been passed.

⁸ Including 3 convicted for setting up an extremist community, and also for a murder where the hate motive was not recognized.

⁹ Estimated minimum.

¹⁰ Estimated minimum.

	Number of convictions	Number of offenders convicted	Including probational sentences or release from punishment
Yaroslavl	1	1	1
Yekaterinburg	3	9	0
<i>Imozo</i>	23	65	18
2008			
Moscow	7	40	4
Moscow oblast ¹	2	11	3
St-Petersburg	4	9	2
Altay kray	1	3 ¹¹	0
Arkhangelsk oblast ¹	1	1	1
Ivanovo	1	1	0
Kaluga	2	13	6
Kostroma	1	1	0
Krasnodar	1	1	0
Lipetsk	1	1	1
Novgorod	1	2	0
Novosibirsk	2	9	5
Omsk	1	4	0
Penza oblast ¹	1	1	0
Samara	1	1	1
Sverdlovsk oblast ¹	3	10	0
Tambov	1	3	3
Vladimir oblast ¹	1	2	0
Yaroslavl	1	1	1
<i>Total</i>	33	114	28
2009			
Moscow	1	2	1
St-Petersburg	1	3	1
Cheboksary	1	7	0
Kaluga oblast ¹	2	7	2
Kirov	1	2	0
Khabarovsk	1	2	0
Vladimir oblast ¹	1	1	0
<i>Total</i>	8	24	4

¹¹ Including one convicted without mentioning hate motivation.

Statistics of convictions for hate propaganda in 2004 – April 30, 2009¹²

	Number of convictions	Number of offenders convicted	Including probational sentences or release from punishment
2004			
Izhevsk	1	1	1
Novgorod	1	1	0
Novosibirsk	1	1	1
<i>Total</i>	3	3	2
2005			
Moscow	1	1	1
Kemerovo Oblast	4	4 ¹³	1
Khabarovsk	1	1	0 ¹⁴
Kirov	1	1	0
Nalchik	1	1	1
Novgorod	1	3	0
Oryol	1	2	2
Syktvykar	1	1	1
Yekaterinburg	1	1	0
<i>Total</i>	12	15	6
2006			
Moscow	1	1	0
Moscow Oblast	1	1	0
St. Petersburg	2	2	1
Astrakhan Oblast	1	1	0
Chelyabinsk	1	3	0
Kemerovo	2	2	2
Kirov	1	1	0
Krasnodar	1	1	0
Novgorod	1	1	0
Samara	2	2	2
Saratov	1	1	1
Syktvykar	1	1	0
Yaroslavl	1	2	1

¹² The table does not include sentences which we see as open misuse of the law.

¹³ One individual was convicted twice within one year; he faced the same charges, but for different incidents.

¹⁴ The sentence was lifted due to expiry of the statute of limitations.

	Number of convictions	Number of offenders convicted	Including probational sentences or release from punishment
Yekaterinburg	1	1	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>7</i>
2007			
Moscow	1	1	1
Barnaul	1	1	1
Blagoveshchensk	1	1	0
Cheboksary	1	4	0
Chelyabinsk	1	1	0
Gornoaltaysk	1	2	2
Kaliningrad	1	1	1
Kaluga	1	8	0
Kirov	1	1	0
Krasnodar	3	3	2
Kurgan	1	1	0
Novgorod	1	1	0
Novosibirsk	3	3	0
The Komi Republic	3	3	0
Ryazan	1	2	0
Samara	1	2	2
Sverdlovsk Oblast	1	1	0
Stavropol Krai	1	1	1
Ulyanovsk	1	1	1
Vladimir	1	1	0
Vologda Oblast	1	1	1
Yakutia	1	2	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>12</i>
2008			
Moscow	2	4	3
St. Petersburg	3	3	0
Astrakhan oblast'	2	4	0
Barnaul	1	1	0
Blagoveshchensk	2	4	2
Bryansk	1	1	0
Chelyabinsk	2	2	1
Dagestan	1	2	2

	Number of convictions	Number of offenders convicted	Including probational sentences or release from punishment
Kaliningrad	1	1	0
Kazan	1	6	1
Krasnodar	1	1	0
Kursk	1	1	1
Leningrad oblast'	1	1	1
Lipetsk	1	1	0
Maykop	1	1	0
Nenetskiy okrug	1	1	0
Novgorod	2	2	0
Novosibirsk	1	1	1
Penza	1	1	1
Petrozavodsk	2	2	2
Rostov-on-Don	2	2	1
Samara	3	3	1
Stavropol	1	1	0
Syktvykar	2	2	0
Tumen	1	1	0
Ulan-Ude	1	1	1
Ulyanovsk	1	4	0
Vladimir oblast'	1	1	0
Vladivostok	1	1	1
Voronezh	1	1	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>20</i>
2009			
Moscow	2	4	1
Kaliningrad	1	1	1
Krasnodar	1	1	0
Novgorod	1	1	0
Petropavlovsk	1	2	2
Samara	1	1	1
Tomsk	1	1	0
Tumen oblast'	1	1	0
Vologda oblast'	1	1	0
Якутия	1	1	0
<i>Итого</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>5</i>

**Statistics of convictions for incitement to extremism
(art. 280 of Criminal Code) in 2005 – April 30, 2009**

	Number of convictions	Number of offenders convicted	Including probational sentences or release from punishment
2005			
Kemerovo	3	3	2
Kirov	1	1	1
<i>Total</i>	4	4	3
2006			
Moscow	1	1	0
Astrakhan oblast ⁷	1	1	0
Kemerovo	2	2	2
Nizhni Novgorod	2	2	0
Chelyabinsk	1	3	0
<i>Total</i>	7	9	2
2007			
Kemerovo	1	1	0
Krasnodar	1	1	0
Novgorod	1	1	0
Chelyabinsk	1	1	0
<i>Total</i>	5	5	0
2008			
Moscow	1	1	0
Vologda oblast ⁷	1	2	1
Ekaterinburg	1	1	0
Kazan ¹⁵	1	6	1
Kaluga oblast ⁷	1	1	0
Samara	2	3	3
<i>Total</i>	7	15	6
2009			
Kemerovo oblast ⁷	1	1	1
<i>Total</i>	1	1	1

¹⁵ Verdict for Kazan Russian National Unity members includes also art. 282 of the Criminal Code.

Appendix 2. Organizations Found by Russian Courts to be Extremist

The following list is composed of three sections:

I. The official ‘List of public and religious associations, and other non-commercial organizations which have been liquidated or had their activities prohibited by the courts on grounds established by the Federal Law on Combating Extremist Activity’, as it appears on the website of the Russian Ministry of Justice on 14 April 2009.

II. A list of other organizations which have been found extremist in court (in chronological order).

III. Organizations found by the Russian Supreme Court to be terrorist (according to the official publication of 18 July 2006, with further additions as of 14 April 2009). In accordance with the law, terrorist activity equates to extremist activity, therefore these organizations may also be considered extremist.

Participation in the continued activity of organizations banned or liquidated as extremist is a criminal offence and prosecutable under article 282-2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (‘Participation in a banned organization’).

I. The official list of extremist organizations¹

1. The interregional public organization the National Bolshevik Party [*Natsional-bol'shevistskaia partiia*]. Found extremist by Moscow City Court on 19 April 2007 (effective as of 7 August 2007).
2. The Krasnodar Orthodox Slavic Community VEC RA (Vedic Culture of Russian Aryans) of Scythian Ves` Rasseniia [*Krasnodarskaia Pravoslavnaia Slavianskaia Obshchina "VEC RA" (Vedicheskoi Kul'tury Rossiiskikh Ariei) Skifskoi Vesi Rassenii*]. Found extremist by Krasnodar Krai Court on 5 October 2006.
3. The Kuban Council of the Spiritual Ancestral Russian Empire Rus` (Krasnodar Krai chapter of the Spiritual Ancestral Russian Empire Rus` organization) [*Rada zemli Kubanskoi Dukhovno-Rodovoi Derzhavy Rus'*]

¹ The first list of such organizations was published on the official website of the Federal Registration Service of Russia at the beginning of April 2008. Currently the list is disseminated via the official website of the Ministry of Justice (<http://www.minjust.ru/ru/activity/nko/perechen/>).

- (*Krasnodarskoe kraevoe otdelenie organizatsii "Dukhovno-rodovaia derzhava Rus"*)). Found extremist by Pervomaiskii District Court of Krasnodar on 27 April 2006 (effective as of 16 May 2006).
4. The Asgard Slavic Community of the Belovod'e Asgard Ves' Spiritual Department, Old-Russian Ingling Church of Orthodox Old Believer-Ingling [Asgardskaia Slavianskaia Obshchina Dukhovnogo Upravleniia Asgardskoi Vesi Belovod'ia Drevnerusskoi Ingliiisticheskoi tserkvi Pravoslavnykh Staroverov-Inglingov]. Found extremist by Omsk Oblast Court on 30 April 2004.
 5. The Kapishche Vedy Perun Slavic Community of the Belovod'e Asgard Ves' Spiritual Department, Old-Russian Ingling Church of Orthodox Old Believer-Ingling [Slavianskaia Obshchina Kapishcha Vedy Peruna Dukhovnogo Upravleniia Asgardskoi Vesi Belovod'ia Drevnerusskoi Ingliiisticheskoi tserkvi Pravoslavnykh Staroverov-Inglingov]. Found extremist by Omsk Oblast Court on 30 April 2004.
 6. The Men's Spiritual Seminary - Institution of Professional Religious Education, Old-Russian Ingling Church of Orthodox Old Believer-Ingling [Muzhskaia Dukhovnaia Seminariia Dukhovnoe Uchrezhdenie professional'nogo religioznogo obrazovaniia Drevnerusskoi Ingliiisticheskoi Tserkvi Pravoslavnykh Staroverov-Inglingov]. Found extremist by Omsk Oblast Court on 30 April 2004.
 7. The international religious association 'Nurdjular' (*Nurdzhular*). Deemed extremist by a decision prohibiting their activities taken by the Supreme Court of Russia on 10 April 2008.
 8. The Akhtubinsk people's movement 'For the Empire of God' (*K Bogod-erzhaviiu*) public association. Found extremist by the Akhtubinsk town court, Astrakhan region, as of 17 July 2008, and by the civil chamber of Astrakhan Oblast court as of 17 September 2008.

II. Other organizations deemed extremist

1. Russian National Unity (*Russkoe natsional'noe edinstvo, RNE*) regional chapter in Omsk. Found extremist by Omsk Oblast Court on 10 October 2002.
2. RNE regional chapter in Tatarstan. Found extremist by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Tatarstan on 21 May 2003 (effective as of 5 June 2003).
3. Ryazan town public patriotic organization Russian National Unity (*Russkoe natsional'noe edinstvo, RGOPO RNE*). Found extremist by the Zheleznodorozhnyi district court of Ryazan at the end of March 2008 (effective as of 7 April 2008).

III. Organizations found by the Russian Supreme Court to be terrorist²

1. High Military Council Majlisul Shura of the United Mujahideen Forces of the Caucasus [*Vysshii voennyi Madzhlisul' Shura Ob'edinennykh sil modzhakkhedov Kavkaza*]
2. Ichkeriia and Dagestan People's Congress [*Kongress narodov Ichkerii i Dagestana*]
3. The Base (al-Qaida) [*Baza (Al'-Kaida)*]
4. Asbat al-Ansar
5. Holy War (al-Jihad, or Egyptian Islamic Jihad) [*Sviashchennaia voina (Al'-Dzhikhad ili Egipetskii islamskii dzhikhad)*]
6. Islamic Group (al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya) [*Islamskaia grupa (Al'-Gamaa al'-Islamiia)*]
7. Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun) [*Brat'ia-musul'mane (Al'-Ikhvan al'-Muslimun)*]
8. Party of Islamic Liberation (Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami) [*Partiia islamskogo osvobozhdeniia (Khizb ut-Tahrir al'-Islami)*]
9. Lashkar-e-Tayyiba [*Lashkar-I-Taiba*]
10. Islamic Group (Jamaat-e-Islami) [*Islamskaia grupa (Dzhamaat-i-Islami)*]
11. Taliban Movement [*Dvizhenie Taliban*]
12. Islamic Party of Turkistan (formerly Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) [*Islamskaia partiia Turkestana (byvshee Islamskoe dvizhenie Uzbekistana)*]
13. Society of Social Reforms (Jamiat al-Islah al-Ijtimai) [*Obshchestvo sotsial'nykh reform (Dzhamiat al'-Islakh al'-Idzhtimai)*]
14. Society of the Revival of Islamic Heritage (Jamiat Ihya at-Turaz al-Islami) [*Obshchestvo vozrozhdeniia islamskogo nasledii (Dzhamiat Ikh'ia at-Turaz al'-Islami)*]
15. Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation (The House of Two Holy Places) [*Dom dvukh sviatyn' (Al'-Kharamain)*]
16. Islamic Jihad - Jamaat Mojahedin [*Islamskii dzhikhad – Dzhamaat modzhakkhedov*]
17. Jund ash-Sham [*Dzhund ash-Sham*]
18. The international organization 'al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb' (*Al'-Kaida v stranakh islamskogo Magriba*). Found terrorist by the Supreme Court of Russia as of 13 November 2008.

² The official list of organizations found terrorist by the Supreme Court of Russia was published on 18 July 2006. It then contained 15 organizations. Subsequent additions are made by us on the basis of known decisions by the Supreme Court.

For notes
