Special Report

Islamic sermons in prisons: Russia's experience

Alexey Starostin (2020)
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From the late middle ages and the early modern era, Russia’s territory expanded to encompass the Volga, the Urals, Siberia; in the 18th and 19th centuries, parts of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia were also incorporated. This period saw the country acquire new subjects who were followers of various religious traditions: Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Catholicism, Lutheranism, and paganism. Authorities therefore developed religious policy in relation to various religious groups, adopting regulations that defined functions and powers of religious professionals, rules for the construction of religious buildings, a loyalty oath to the monarch, and the possibility of worship for military personnel as well as for people who had committed crimes and were in prison.

Empress Catherine II played a key role in both regulating the religious policy of the Russian Empire and in the development of its penitentiary system. In the first case, in 1773, the Holy Synod, at the direction of the Empress, issued a decree:

“On tolerance of all faiths and on the prohibition of bishops to enter into the affairs concerning other religions and the construction of houses of worship under their law, leaving all these matters to secular authorities”.1

This marked the beginning of a policy of religious tolerance in Russia.

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1 The Synod's decree on tolerance of all faiths and on the prohibition of bishops to enter into cases concerning pre-religious confessions and before the construction of houses of worship under their law, representing all these secular superiors, June 17, 1773 / Full assembly of the laws of the Russian Empire. First volume. 1770-1774." St. Petersburg, 1830, P.19, p. 775-776 (No. 13996).
In the second case, Catherine II began to fight against public torture, a civilised criminal-executive system was established, and the Prison Regulatory Project was adopted. Most of the several dozen prisons built under Catherine II still operate today.²

As a rule, litigation and disputes related to family relationships – such as infidelity, disobedience of children to parents, and the division of property and inheritance among national minorities – were decided based on religious traditions. In cases of serious crimes involving the appropriation of other people's property, grievous bodily harm, mutilation, or murder, offenders were brought to justice in accordance with imperial law.³

Imperial experience of Islamic sermons

Almost immediately after Siberia joined Russia, one of the most frequent punishments became exile to the region for hard labour. The state viewed convicts as an important colonising resource so lengthy sentences were imposed. At the end of a sentence, former convicts were obliged to live near their place of detention for a given period, which simultaneously prevented them returning to their places of origin and facilitated subsidence in Siberia.

The severity of certain crimes made it impossible for large numbers of Muslim convicts to return to their homeland and they remained in Siberia and the Far East, signing themselves and their children into the tax estate. Enforced settlement in remote places distanced them from the urban population and served to populate remote regions. In addition, the number of visitors was strictly prevented from exceeding that of one-third of the indigenous population.

Many Muslims were among the exiles. More than half of the Muslims exiled in the 19th century were convicted of theft. Perinov notes that in the list of thefts, horse stealing was most frequent, reflecting the attitude of many groups of Russian Muslims. More than 10% of sentences were for crimes “against life”. Pre-revolutionary researchers attributed this to "an unstoppable wild outbreak of Asian peoples, still unsettled and uncivil." 4

Those sentenced to hard labour for especially audacious crimes were sent exclusively to Eastern Siberia and the Far East. As Potapova notes,

"The main contingent that joined the ranks of the Muslims of Sakhalin were convicts, the most unhinged criminals-recidivists from the Caucasus; this was the only way to protect the western part of the Russian Empire – to send them to a distant island from where it is almost impossible to escape."

For example, Sultan Ferdali Ogly, a native of the Caucasus, who killed a fellow believer in the mosque "in the presence of many residents while the victim was performing a prayer" served his sentence in Eastern Siberia.5

In the Priamur Governorate General at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the majority of the Muslim population was exiled convicts. “The vast majority of convict Muslims who have left Sakhalin now live in Nikolaevsk. It's amazing to what extent their morality is corrupted. Due to the absence of an official imam, their marriages are not registered in the metric books. That's why their marriage relations went beyond Islamic traditions," lamented Amgun mullah Fattahutdinov in 1906.6

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5 Potapova N.V. Religious policy of the Russian Empire and religious life of the Far East in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. (in the example of Sakhalin). South Sakhalinsk: Sakhalin State University; 2009. - p. 182-183.
However, many convicted Muslims sought to practice their faith and the authorities encouraged this by gradually creating the conditions for worship in prisons. Soon after the foundation of Tobolsk, the Order of Exiles was responsible for resettlement in the Asian part of Russia. In 1838, a prison castle was built in Tobolsk, a transit prison designed for 2,000 prisoners. On route to "distant places", the castle received several categories of prisoner: disabled, elderly, and non-Christian, the bulk of whom were Muslims and Jews. Designed for 750 people, the prison could accommodate up to 2,000 prisoners. From 1891 to 1905, the number of Muslims varied from 26% to 76.5% of the total inmate population. Many were natives of the Caucasus, who, according to the prison administration, thanks to "... national intrepidity and determination, as well as ardent temperament, are not afraid of the Russians and keep themselves defiant towards them".

Taking religious diversity into account, prison authorities invited relevant clergymen "to soften the manners". For example, a mullah visiting Tobol prison castle received 180 rubles annually from the Ministry of Justice. He also conducted the Janaz, transporting deceased prisoners to the city's Muslim cemetery. Authorities also organised chapels and prayer rooms: Orthodox, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim. The Muslim prayer room was designed for 60 people. These facilities have been restored and now available to visit.

Prison authorities were aware of the benefits of spiritual and educational work with Islamic convicts. In the report of the Chief of Sakhalin Island, Major General Kononovich, to the Governor-General of 7 February 1890, regarding permission to open a prayer house for "the Mohammedans", he stated,

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7 Funeral rite.
"The chief of the Alexandrov District from 24th January for No919 reported to me that a Turkish citizen Seid Ibrahim Ogly, being in the post of Alexandrovsk last summer, with his permission, purchased a house from a settler Ogly Khotym Mohammed and donated it for the Mohammedans living in Alexandria District and their children as a prayer house and a school, if permission is granted. Finding for my part that the permission to organize a special house of worship can be considered not only desirable in view of meeting the religious needs of the Mohammedans, but also useful in moral terms in general, I have the honor to submit for Your Excellency's permission this issue with applications and add that in the Alexandrov district there are 316 Mohammedan people in total." "

By 1895, the number of Muslims had exceeded a thousand and in 1897 it approached 2,000, which was more than 5% of the population of the island. According to questionnaires collected by Chekhov on the island in 1890, these people were natives of Kazan, Ufa, Saratov, Nizhny Novgorod, Tashkent, and Baku. Therefore, in 1901, a second mosque – for Shiites – began to operate. An Alexandrov official, who visited the post said, "You can see two narrow, round towers of mosques... somewhere on the outskirts." Chekhov, speaking about Muslims living on the island, wrote, "Tatars, even being in the conditions of hard labour, do not forget about their origin, keep honour and dignity." Moreover, Chekhov noted, "They did not give up polygamy in exile and some of them have two wives; for example, Jaksanbetov has two wives in Alexandrovsk, Batyma and Sasena; and Abubakirov has two wives in Korsakovsky as well – Ganosta and Verkhonysa."

In Yakutia, the all-Russian census of 1897 recorded 1,565 Muslims, most of whom were exiles from the Ural Volga regions. At the beginning of the 20th century, a group of

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Muslims filed a petition to the Yakut Governor-General for the organisation of a mosque and the official appointment of a mullah, identified as an ‘H.K. Enikeyev’, an exile from the nobles of the Ufim province. Since the 1870s, he had complied with requests from his fellow believers and from a policeman in Yakutsk in matters of spiritual nourishment, in observing oaths in court, and in providing a public presence.

However, the application was denied. The first mullah for Yakutsk was a G.G. Yangurazov (who is recorded as wanting to feed Muslims in a penitentiary and teach at school) in 1904, and 10 years later an M.S. Saddykov, in Olekminsk. These people were in charge of the prayer halls (rooms in private houses) and the Russian-Tatar school with 35 and 37 students respectively. The mullahs provided relatively systematic knowledge of religion and secular subjects, conducted nikahs and sunnahs, resolved family problems and inheritance issues, and so fully provided for the needs of the ummah.

Islamic religious institutions also functioned in a hard labour colony near Irkutsk. This is the testimony left by a famous Siberian imam, formerly the Kazakh of the Orenburg Magometan Spiritual Assembly, Abdrashid Ibragimov:

“Taking advantage of the fact that I am in Irkutsk, I visited the villages around the city and looked at the madrassahs that are accessible to all. The villagers were all exiles, all of them were serving prison sentences, and then they had to stay here. Despite this, they preserved their religion and built mosques and madrassahs. There are even a madrassa and a mosque for convicts and prisoners. The prison population stands at 25,000, almost an entire city. Except for the officials. The rest of the inhabitants are disenfranchised prisoners, but they are also people, like us, and they follow all religious customs. One of the prisoners has his status as an imam of Muslims. His name is Sheikh Miftahuddin, the imam of ‘Alexander’ prison. He is a very good man; he has little religious knowledge, but strong faith, care, and is very God-fearing. He fulfils his religious tasks, teaching criminals and murderers to respect religion.
Belief in religion among such people, deprived of human rights, is a good cause.

The ‘Alexander’ prison is small, but every year all new prisoners come here; their number is about eight thousand people. Those who have their sentences coming to an end are four thousand. They usually stay to live after serving time in the same villages for the rest of their lives. I’ve seen prisoners in thirty-five-degree frost working outdoors. There are coal mines here, and workers in them do not wash for weeks, so their faces are black from coal dust and cause fear and disgust.

There are religious people among the prisoners. Some were imprisoned for religion; most Russians are serving sentences for politics. Prison has turned their happy life into suffering. Many have nothing human left. Some political prisoners have been here for more than 18 years. There are women among the prisoners; they do very humiliating work. The hard work in the prison is called ‘katorga’ in Russian. Every prisoner works in his trade. In addition to working in the quarry there is a tailor, shoemaker, carpenter, key manufacturer, jeweller, and handymen.

A lot of money is made in the production of goods that are made in prison. Each specialty has its own salary. This money is collected by the prison treasury: one third goes to the state, one third to the prison and one third to the salaries of prisoners when they are released from prison. Among the prisoners were those who were engaged in collecting money and on release had in their hands four-to-five thousand rubles. Some of them made their careers in trade and enriched themselves, but they were forbidden from returning to their homeland.

Among their sit-ins, they call each other ‘tolib’ (student). There are quite a few knowledge-holders among them, and I met one such tolib. I entered a discussion with him:

- Tell me, prison is hard labour, isn’t it?
- I think that all the prisoners here are political, because most of them are authoritative and respected people in their homeland. They served the people. Unlike them, we lived very poorly, we didn't even have food or medicine. For us, life is better here than in our hometown. At least here we are not forbidden to work, the only thing to complain about is remoteness from the hometown, family and children. But those who live here as families, they are all right.

- So, you're satisfied with your situation?
- We deserve to be punished for what we have done and we are in exile, but what is my family's fault? The sons and daughters were left without a breadwinner. Who's providing for them now? They became orphans with a living father. I don't think it's fair.

I liked the words of this convict, and I asked him what he thought was fair. He replied:
- I believe that exile for the perpetrator is not a punishment, although there is a feeling of pain and separation, but when he goes to prison this pain subdues, but the family of the perpetrator receives a greater punishment. The state has its own policy in this matter: the settlement of occupied lands. There is another important point of increasing crime in the cities from which these people were expelled. I think it's a harsh punishment when your family is to blame for you. I have small children of three and five years old; who will provide for them? They will be left without education. I was a reckless man but I would have certainly send them to school so they wouldn't be uneducated like me. But I was sent into exile without consideration of the fact that my three children would be left without education and the number of uneducated would increase, hence the increase in crime in the country.
His words touched me, but suddenly a prison guard appeared and forbade to continue the conversation. I took a little walk around the village of convicts and returned to Irkutsk.”  

Among the convicted Muslims were not only ordinary criminals, but also religious fanatics who opposed imperial power. For example, Muslim rebels against the government were condemned as political criminals. For some (records include the names of Abdrakhamov, Maznaev, Satarov, Tadetbayev, and Toshmatov) the death penalty was replaced by hard labour. A D.I. Mendeleev, who came to visit his native Tobolsk in 1899, wrote, "I was taken to a convict prison on the edge, where inveterate murderers and criminals like Andijan Central Asians, who committed fanatical murders in the military, were imprisoned for different periods, to who, despite the severity of the crimes committed, the mullah was regularly invited".

One of the brightest representatives of the Islamic sectarianism of the Russian Empire was Bagautdin Vaisov (1810-1893), the founder of the ‘Vaisov movement’ which did not recognise the state institutions, the Orenburg Magomethane spiritual assembly, and class division. He called himself a ‘sardar’ (commander), called his followers ‘Firka-i-Najya’ (‘Rescue Group’/‘Party of Deliverance’), idealised Volga Bulgaria, and "sowed confusion" among Muslims. He created the Imperial Prayer House of Maktab Girfan, i.e., the Muslim Academy. He and his supporters were exiled to the Tobol and Tomsk provinces, where they continued to campaign among their fellow believers. In opposition to their "destructive power", the authorities, Orthodox and Islamic servers united.

13 Yarkov AP Muslims in the history of Tobol prison // Muslim world - No.3 - 2018. p. 16.
Thus, during the imperial period, especially in the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century, the prison authorities began to promote the formation of Muslim prayer rooms in or near prisons and to attract Muslim clergy "to soften morals" and to counter the spread of Islamic religious fanaticism emanating from the leaders of various kinds of uprisings and religious sects who had entered Russian prisons and begun hard labour.

**Mass repressions against believers during the Soviet period**

After the revolution and the civil war, when the Bolsheviks emerged as victors and the implementation of militant atheism began, it was extremely difficult to talk about Islamic preaching in prisons, although in some limited form it continued to exist.

After the start of the campaign to close religious institutions and mass repression against clergy and believers in the late 1920s and 1930s, hundreds of Islamic religious figures and parishioners were shot and thousands found themselves in the Gulag system.

In 1927 there had been 3,900 Muslim clerics in the country but by 1934 their numbers had fallen to 1,000.\(^{15}\) The Museum of Islamic Culture at the Kul Sharif Mosque presents lists of repressed imams with more than 1,000 names.

It is clear that in prisons and camps it was very difficult to talk about the observance of any Islamic religious customs, much less a sermon among fellow believers. There are few such stories. In 2011, I recorded an interview with Ulfat-Khazrat Shakirov – an elderly imam-hatib of the Cathedral Mosque in Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk region. Talking about his father, state Imam Mukhametyan Shakirov from Naryshev (now the Burayev district of the Republic of Bashkortostan), who had five young children and a large farm by the early 1930s, Shakirov said,

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"On 10 November 1933, UGPU officers came to the house of Mukhametyan-Khazrat. The Chekists told him, ‘Listen, mullah. If you give up your rank, you will ease your destiny, we will send you to the construction of Magnitogorsk, and if not, you will go to the bears and feel timber in the Siberian taiga; choose’. But Mukhametyan-Khazrat did not want to become an oath-breaker. He said, ‘When I received the order entering the imam’s rank, I swore an oath to Allah, and to my teachers; to serve Muslims faithfully in the way of Allah. If I retreat, I will commit a great sin and Allah will punish me for breaking the oath’. His fate was sealed. He was held under investigation for six months. And on 5 March 1934, Mukhamyan-Khazrat was sentenced according to article 58-02 on counter-revolutionary activities.

Three houses belonging to the mullah (the house of the imam, the madrassah, and the dormitories of the Shakirds) were confiscated together with the cattle; the minaret at the mosque was broken; and Hazrat, his wife and all the children were escorted to the city of Asha, where, along with others from Ukraine, Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk regions and Bashkiria (a total of 640 families, about 2,400 people) were put in freight cars and taken to the east”.

The whole family, with hundreds of similarly unfortunate people, as the heroes of Guzel Yakhina’s popular novel *Suleikha Opens Her Eyes*, was sent in veal wagons to Siberia, landing beyond Tomsk, loaded into barges and sent up the river Chuslym.

Dozens of people died of starvation and flux during this journey. In the camp, three-quarters of the convicts were Tatars and Bashkirs, and one-quarter were Ukrainians. The convicts were engaged in timber work. The only religious relief that the convicts were able to achieve was the following:

“In the camp canteen they occasionally gave meat. At the request of the Muslims, pork was not brought to the camp. Instead, beef or bear cubs sometimes appeared in the settlers’ diet when the guards would kill a bear.”
Being one of the few literate people, Mukhametyan Shakirov was appointed as a warehouse supervisor. He kept all documentation in exemplary order as he personally controlled the loading of the timber. Being in good standing with the camp’s superiors, he was able to gradually get his family to be released home. He himself was able to return only after 13 years in 1946. "Having hugged his relatives and after a little rest, he appealed to the court with a demand to return him a decree on his imam appointment, confiscated by the UGPU. Paradoxically, Mukhametyan Shakirov, having passed a series of difficult tests, achieved his goal. The paper was returned to him in May 1946. On the decree on top of the seal of the Muftiate was the seal of the NKVD and the signature of the authorised person." Even after going through the camps, he continued his religious activities.\(^{16}\)

There is another amazing example: in 1944-1949 in Prokopievsk, peasants who were exiled from Bashkoria to Kuzbass, among whom there were several mullahs – including Mukhamet Siyatdinov and Sagit Sabitov – managed to formally register the Muslim community and organise a prayer house attended by both adults and elderly people who worked in the mines, as well as young students from factory-training schools, mobilised from Tatar ACSR in 1946-1947. However, in 1949, due to the lack of funding, the community ceased operations and the house of worship was closed.\(^{17}\)

But, again, these examples are an exception to the rule. Most imams who had gone through Stalin's camps and managed to return home either stopped their religious activities or prayed quietly without passing on their religious knowledge to young people. As a result, only small groups of old people continued to practice Islamic religious rites, and then only life-cycle rites (e.g., nikakh, janaza-namaz), although attitudes towards food remained among the younger generation, like the avoidance of pork.


On the expansion of Islamist ideology and ‘traditional Islam’

Since I will continue to use the terms Islamism, Salafism, and traditional Islam repeatedly, I should define them and explain their meanings.

Much authoritative research has focused on Islamism and Islamist groups. This includes work by Keppel,18 Roy,19 Pipes,20 Esposito,21 Meijer,22 Ignatenko,23 and Malashenko.24

Many Western studies consider Salafism and Jihadism as equals, while Wahhabism is singled out as a separate category. In the publications of many modern foreign scholars, Islamists, adherents of the Salafist current of Islam, are divided into a number of smaller and highly specialised factions, the difference between them being measured by how radical an interpretation of the vital issues of Salafism they adhere to.

For example, Michael Dillon in his work Wahhabism - a factor in the spread of global terrorism? highlights Wahhabism, neo-Habism, Neosalafism, and Islamism.25 Viktorovich divides the Salafist movement into three main factions: purists, political forces, and jihadists:

1) Purists do not pursue any political goals and reject violence.

2) ‘Politicals’ or political Salafists advocate the creation of a God-pleasing society within the Islamic State, which is possible as a result of political struggle.

3) Jihadist Salafists are ready to build the Islamic State with weapons. They are an obvious minority.26

Dar singles out another important group – Takfiris. They accuse Muslims who do not share their ideology of disbelief (kufra). This is the main feature of Takfirism that distinguishes it from other Islamist movements.27 This has led to the demonisation of Salafists in the academic community. This view, in turn, is actively supported in the media. The Arabic word Salafia has come to identify a religious fanatic.

Muhamad al-Buti distinguishes people who believe following the examples of ancestors (Salaf) is an inseparable component of Islamic ethics from the madhhab-like concept of Salafism.

“Salafia is a new madhhab invented and introduced to the religion of Allah... this madhhab was constructed by individuals under the influence of their personal inclinations and prejudices, after which they stated that the building they had built from bricks... gathers under its roof the surviving Islamic society, under the mentorship of Scripture and Sunna, and if someone bends in favour of other verdicts on controversial issues, he must be considered a good-for-nothing innovator of religion.” 28

This work uses the concept of ‘Islamic radicalism’, as explained by Dobaev:

"Islamic radicalism... is an ideological doctrine and a social and political practice based on it, characterized by the normative and valuable consolidation of ideological, political-ideological, and even armed confrontation of the world of ‘true’ Islam in relation to the world of infidels outside and the world of ‘untrue faith’ within Islam and demand absolute social control and mobilization (of service to the idea) of their supporters." ²⁹

The term 'Islamism' is used in this paper in accordance with Ignatenko’s definition:

"Islamism (Arab). Political Islam is a religious and political ideology and practical activity aimed at creating an environment in which any contradictions within a society and a state where there is a Muslim population, as well as interstate relations with their participation will be decided on the basis of Sharia law." ³⁰

The causes and consequences of the spread of radical Islamic ideology in Russia and in the post-Soviet space are well-researched and described in a number of studies.³¹ One reason for this was the destruction of the System of Islamic Education in the Soviet years and the loss of spiritual continuity. In the USSR, there was only one madrassah for the whole country – Mir-and-Arab in Bukhara, which was only allowed to enrol six people annually from the country. After the Iron Curtain collapsed in the 1990s, Middle Eastern states’ representatives began to come to Russia to translate and publish their books in Russian (many of which later entered the federal list of extremist materials), to invite young Russians to study in madrassahs in the Middle East free-of-charge, and to begin teaching in newly opened madrassahs.

In this literature and in the process of teaching its material, radical Islamic ideas were put into the heads of Russian Muslims, especially the call to focus on the way of life and faith of the early Muslim community, on the ‘righteous ancestors’ (‘as-Salaf al-Salihun’); the qualification as ‘bida’ (innovation, novelty) of all later innovations in the religious sphere, such as the symbolism-allegory interpretation of the Koran; many practices of Sufism prevalent in the North Caucasus, Siberia, and Central Asia, for example, visits to the graves of ‘aulia’, seen as ‘the worship of the dead’. The undesirability and censure of the tradition of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad – the feast of Maulid al-Nabi, which is widespread in Muslim regions of Russia – became more widespread. Advocates of radical Islamism believe that calling out the Prophet Muhammad or other prophets and righteous people of Islam is considered one of the manifestations of shirka (idolatry, polytheism).

In the 1990s, Arabs and Russians who studied in Arab educational institutions in the Russian hinterland looked almost like living companions of the Prophet Muhammad, as they seemed so literate in matters of theology. However, when conflicts broke out in Muslim communities, as the practice taught by the graduates of foreign educational institutions was sharply at odds with the traditions inherited by the elderly from pre-revolutionary times (even in the form of prayer), when young people under the influence of these sermons began to become radicalised and were sent to conflict zone, Russian society realised the seriousness of the problem.

In turn, as a political and ideological counterweight to various Islamist concepts among the Russian Muslim community in the 1990s and 2000s, a concept of ‘traditional Islam’ was formed, which came to be supported by the official Russian authorities.
Ildar Bayazitov, the Imam of the Kazan Mosque Yardam, Mukhtasib of the Moscow and Kirov districts of Kazan, chairman of the Yardem Foundation, and member of the Public Supervisory Commission of the Republic of Tatarstan, reasoned as follows:

“Traditional Islam has been one of the most discussed terms in the Muslim community in recent years. Many people call it controversial because they perceive it as some kind of innovation, designed to interpret the Muslim religion differently. This view is a great misconception, as the term is an attempt to denote the great spiritual heritage that Islam has given us. Traditional Islam is following the Koran, the Sunna and the theological traditions that have come out of them.

It is especially important for the Tatars that we had a galaxy of Sunnite Hanafi theologians who understood how to build the lives of Muslims of Russia, so as not to contradict the Koran and The Sunna, but also to be law-abiding and peaceful citizens of their own country. It is a plexus of the Koranic tradition and the non-contradicting tradition of life, developed by the history of the Tatars.

Following tradition is one of the reasons for the preservation and, however paradoxical it may sound, the development of Islam. Previously, there were no computers and television, even mass printing appeared relatively recently, so Islam was passed down from generation to generation through tradition. It was tradition that was the instrument by which our ancestors remained faithful to the religion of our Prophet.

The Prophet Muhammad himself followed some traditions, such as the order of the Hajj, which came from the Prophet Ibrahim or the tradition of Kurban, which also came from the Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail.

Traditional Islam is Prophetic Islam. It was through a tradition that the foundations of Islam were passed on from generation to generation and

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Muslims were able to maintain a pure Islam. Therefore, pure Islam, which has come to us since its foundation, is precisely traditional Islam. Traditional Islam is Prophetic Islam, which is based on the Koran and the Sunna.

The need for the term ‘traditional Islam’ arose only because in recent decades in Islam and near Islam there have been various sects and pseudo-Islamic teachings that began to distort the foundations of pure Sunnite Islam, to substitute concepts and to use religion for purposes that are not typical of it. That is why sincere Muslims "Ahlyu Sunna wal Jamaa" had a need to indicate that they follow the traditions of our Prophet Muhammad.

It is wrong to interpret traditional Islam as ethnic Islam. Of course, in the best traditions of Sunnite Islam, traditional Islam takes into account cultural, geographical and ethnic characteristics that fit into Muslim norms. Islam has always taken into account local traditions and features, if they do not contradict the basics of religion. The tradition of Islam is that it, while preserving its pillars, meaning and letters, has adapted to different conditions. This is the secret of its success and such mass distribution.

Traditional Islam is a scientific and educational Islam. In addition, Islam has always been modern and relevant to its time. It has always stimulated the development of sciences and arts. The tradition of Islam is to promote progress and development. Those teachings that try to return Islam to the conditions of the Middle Ages destroy the Muslim community, turning Islamic countries into lagging and underdeveloped states.

However, the very tradition of Islam is the history of the development of sciences. The first universities in the world appeared in Muslim countries, the system of numbers that the whole world uses is Arabic. Today, many Muslims are known to influence the development of sciences.... most importantly, it is obvious that Islam stimulates the development of sciences and has done a lot for human progress.
The introduction of education, the development of sciences, the progressiveness of thinking is what Muslims need today and this is what traditional Islam calls for. Today the countries such as Turkey and Malaysia, where traditional Islam has always dominated, demonstrate serious achievements in the development of sciences, economics, industry and education.

This is important proof that traditional Islam is an incentive for development. In those CIS countries where the authorities have relied on the support of traditional Islam, we also see the serious achievements that Muslim peoples have been able to achieve. This is primarily Russia and Kazakhstan.

Traditional Islam is social Islam. Social work is more important than ever. The history of Islam is a history of charity, solving social problems, and the social integration of Muslims into the societies where they live.

Today, when there are more social problems in our society than ever before, Muslims must focus their energies on solving them. The Muslim tradition gives us many examples of how the complexities and problems facing modern society can be effectively addressed.

It is clear that Muslims must also make a significant contribution to the solution of the social problems that have accumulated in the country. The reason for this evidence is that social service is the responsibility of every Muslim, from ordinary members of mosques to imams and ulemas. Strengthening faith and spirituality as the basis of Muslim self-awareness is the main condition on the road to realizing the fundamental need for social service.

Muslims must benefit the society in which they live, it is our sacred duty. It is through the achievement of social stability that it is possible to prevent extremist and other radical sentiments in our country.

As we understand the term, traditional Islam itself is the quintessence of the whole meaning of Islam, its letter and spirit. The term itself refers to the tradition
of following the Koran and Sunna as the foundation of Muslim life, recognition of local specifics and culture that do not contradict Islam, solving social problems and actively participating in modern achievements, i.e., the development of sciences, industry, economics, art. All of these are parts of true Islam, its traditions. It is to make Muslims understand what real Islam, which meets all these requirements, that the need to use the term ‘traditional Islam’ has arisen. It is simply a word that gives us an understanding of the fullness of our religion. We all need to realise that traditional Islam is true Islam, pure Islam, it is the foundation of our religion.”

Such a significant quotation is necessary for a full understanding of what the Russian Federation means by ‘traditional Islam’ which is distributed among Muslim believers through the official Spiritual Administrations of Muslims and imams and muftis serving there. It is this understanding of Islam that is supported by the Russian authorities and is an ideological base to counter the spread of various teachings of Islamic radicalism.

Reasons for the spread of Islamist ideology in prisons in the present
The collapse of the Soviet Union had a negative impact on the economy of the former Soviet republics, leading to the impoverishment of the population and rampant criminality. At the same time, the Soviet system of spiritual administrations of Muslims also disintegrated and a penetration of Salafist ideology into Russian regions heavily populated by Muslims occurred.

After the events of the first and second Chechen campaigns, the overcoming of terrorist activity by Russian law enforcement agencies in the North Caucasus, and the identification of supporters of various international extremist and terrorist Islamist organisations, there were large numbers of former militants, ideologues, and supporters of

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radical Islamist movements in prisons in the 1990s and 2000s. These included supporters of Imarat Caucasus, Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami, Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Jamaat Tablig, and the Islamic Party of Turkestan. The activities of all these organisations are prohibited in the Russian Federation.

Prior to the tightening of anti-terrorism legislation, some representatives of these groups, particularly Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami, had deliberately committed general criminal offences in order to wage ‘prison jihad’, i.e., to recruit and disseminate their extremist ideology in prisons.34

Who were the targets of this recruitment drive? Firstly, foreign citizens. The number of migrants in Russia is about 10 million people. About a quarter of them (estimates vary: e.g., 2 million people in 2018; 2.6 million people in 2017) are in Russia illegally.35

According to the Federal Migration Service of Russia, as of 1 January 2016, there were 9,924,726 foreign citizens in the Russian Federation. Places of origin included: Uzbekistan – 18.2%; Tajikistan – 8.7%; Kazakhstan – 6.4%; Kyrgyzstan – 5.6%; Azerbaijan – 5.3%; and Turkey – 0.8%. A total of 45% of the migrants who were in Russia at the beginning of 2016 were from traditionally Muslim countries.36 So immigrants from Muslim countries – where of course Muslims make up varying majorities – represent almost a half of all foreign citizens in Russia.

Of the various criminal offences committed by foreign citizens, drug trafficking, crimes against the person, theft, and the use of forged documents are among the most common.

35 Where do migrants come from in Russia? URL: https://zen.yandex.ru/media/id/5cd9b822da97b800b4826c76/otkuda-v-rossii-migranty-5d8a5b519515ee00ac77b3bc; The Interior Ministry named the number of illegal migrants in Russia URL: https://rg.ru/2018/12/21/v-mvd-nazvali-chislo-nelegalnyh-migrantov-v-rossii.html
Observations in prisons in the Sverdlovsk, Kurgan, Kemerovo and Omsk regions enable the estimation that convicts from countries where Islam is a prominent belief make up about 6-10% of the total number of prisoners.

It was natives of the Central Asian republics that became the primary objects of recruitment. Wahhabi influence on the criminal environment began in earnest after the imprisonment of militants from the second Chechen war and the conviction of members of organised crime syndicates who converted to Islam.

In 2011, a case in the Republic of Tatarstan saw religious extremists beat believers only for belonging to traditional Islam, demanding that they renounce the faith of their ancestors and recognise the truth of Wahhabism. In Kazan colony number 18, an imam was even beaten after preaching about the need to follow the tradition of The Tatars Islam of the Hanafi Mazhab.37

Recruitment targeted non-religious inmates from ethnic groups associated with traditional Islam practice, as well as representatives of other groups – including Russians and Ukrainians – serving sentences for ordinary crimes. For example, an S. Mishurinsky, a terrorist from the Vologda region, had close contacts with an R. Gochiyaev, a well-known terrorist, converting him to the faith and persuading him to launch terrorist attacks after his release. A similar situation occurred with an S. Katuntsev from the Irkutsk region, who, while serving a sentence for robbery, came under the influence of one of the Dagestan Wahhabis.38 Dozens of such cases can be cited.

One of the most famous examples of prison being a recruitment place for Islamist organisations is the case of colony no.2 in the city of Novoulyanovsk in the Ulyanovsk region in the early 2010s. It was there that one of the leaders of the Ulyanovsk Jamaat, Valery

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37 Suleimanov R.R. Wahhabism in Russian prisons: dissemination and consequences URL: http://ruskline.ru/analitika/2014/01/16/vahhabizm_v_rossijskih_tyurmah_rasprostranenie_i_posledstviya
Ilmendeev, created the ‘Caucasus Emirate’. Having adopted Salafist Islam while still on the outside, Ilmendeev, once in prison, immediately launched propaganda among the prisoners. Having become the ‘emir’ of this prison jamaat, he managed to assemble a ‘shura’ from the ranks of criminals, the Jamaat Council, with which he began to recruit fellow inmates to his ranks. The leader of the ‘Caucasus Emirate’, Dok Umarov was given a ‘bayat’ (oath). Upon release, jamaat members were to go to the North Caucasus ‘to wage jihad’, and the second colony of Novoulyanovsk became a recruiting post for the terrorist underground. The situation was aggravated by the fact that prisons were becoming camps for militant recruitment, not only for the ‘hot south’ of the country, but also for the Volga region itself, where in the summer of 2012 there was a terrorist attack against the Mufti of Tatarstan, Ildus Faizov, and Valiullah Yakupov, one of the great theologians of traditional Islam, was killed.

Both the first emir of Tatarstan, Rais Mingaleev, and the second extremist leader in the borders of the Ural-Volga region, Robert Valeev, had served sentences during which they signed up to Wahhabism.  

R.R. Suleimanov of the Institute of National Strategy notes,

"Under ‘prison jihad’, it is necessary to understand the practice of incorporating criminals into the ranks of Islamic fundamentalists, from within the prison. The approach itself is clear: to take up arms and kill ‘in the path of jihad’ – this requires a certain courage and moral and psychological stability. And who, if not criminals, can be capable of such actions. Moreover, the values of prison life, built on a system of unwritten codes, can be easily substituted by the values of religious extremism: ‘to live according to the concepts’, ‘to live according to Sharia’; etc. Popular songs among Wahhabis about the ‘difficult life of thieves’ have their analogue in the work of the Chechen bard, Timur Mutsuraev, whose songs are devoted to the hard life of the ‘warriors of jihad’ wandering in the mountains. Romanticisation of the criminal world in the eyes of criminals easily

echoes the aesthetics and ethics of Wahhabism: generalised ideas about good
and evil and life ‘by concepts’ are easily replaced by life based on sharia in its
fundamentalist understanding.” 40

The spread of Islamist ideology in the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia led to attempts
to form so-called green zones and as representatives of prison jamaats refused to observe
the informal traditions of the thieves’ world. One example is an incident in one of the colonies
of Tuva, where in the winter of 2017, one inmate – jailed for theft – Ruslan Gegechkori,
attacked a group of Chechens and Dagestanians in a prison mosque. According to the portal
‘On Kavkaz’, Gegechkori is a hereditary Georgian thief nicknamed ‘Hat the Younger’. The
reason for the conflict was a quarrel, during which Gegechkori referred to the Chechens
negatively, and one of the prisoners punched him in the face. According to the thieves’ code,
this is a serious insult: the thief cannot be beaten in the face, he can only be punished with
a slap after a decision from ‘the thieves’ gathering’, but this slap should come from another
thief, from an equal.

"However, these thieving laws are not written for Chechens, let alone for Muslim
worshippers, who recognize sharia as the only law,” On Kavkaz writes.

"After the offender Gegechkori and seven other representatives of the Caucasian
diaspora went to pray at the mosque located in the colony, Hat the Younger gathered 20
prisoners, with whom he broke into the room, beat the Caucasians, and then the whole
crowd proceeded to a pogrom of the mosque itself,” the newspaper writes. 41

The ‘Rosbalt’ agency reported that discussion of this incident extended far beyond
the Tuva colony, and threatened to turn into a war between thieves and Muslims. "Now,

40 It’s in the same.
41 Mountain law and sharia: Chechens and Salafists have announced a hunt for a thief who vandalized a
mosque in the zone. URL: http://onkavkaz.com/news/1542-zakon-gor-i-shariat-chechency-i-salafity-objavili-
ohotu-na-vora-razgromivshego-mechet-na-zone.html
among thieves, and among the natives of Chechnya, this topic is actively discussed; in the near future they may well shed blood", Rosbalt.42

A left-wing activist, Daniil Konstantinov, who spent time in prison on charges of murder and hooliganism, said,

"I watched the beginning and development of this conflict while still in pre-trial detention, when everyone had conflicts in the Caucasian camps, where the ‘greens’ (Islamists) openly refused to obey thieves and thieves' codes, building their own structure and introducing their norms of behaviour. ... They responded to all attempts at pressure with well-organised violence, which exceeded the intensity of the violence of the criminals. For example, in one of the camps, the Greens attacked the whole barracks with reinforcements and beat up everyone there. The conflict then spread to other camps with a large Muslim population. There have been conflicts on this ground also in the Sailor's Silence (Sailor's rest prison)."

"It is quite difficult to predict the outcome of such a conflict. In this case, there is a clash of two idiocrasies, whose representatives are guided, first of all, by an idea, and are often ready to sacrifice their lives in the struggle. Both sides have their own resources and advantages. Both are international, and the party is multi-religious. If on the side of the Greens there is a huge mass of young radical Muslims, then the criminals have Christians (including Georgians) and less radical secular Muslims. And yet it seems to me that the criminals will move. The intensity of passion among Islamists is too strong; they are too radical and passion-bound, while guided by extreme, religious, extraterrestrial goals. The ideology of thieves in modern conditions is largely becoming obsolete, giving way to commercial relations, and the special contingent (especially muslims) is trying to find a new foothold in the ‘brothers of faith’.”

42 In the colony, a "thief-in-law" beat Chechens in a mosque
https://www.rosbalt.ru/moscow/2017/02/16/1592285.html
Prison Jamaats also enjoy the support of the armed underground outside, guided by faith, not for reasons of benefit.  

There have been examples of prison jamaats inciting other convicts to riot. One incident took place in the 35th penal colony in the Republic of Khakassia on 25 July 2016. Yaroslav Bajan, the head of the UFSIN of Khakasia, told the media that the instigators of the protests were Muslims who demanded permission to pray at any time and shouted "Allahu Akbar!".  

And at the end of 2019, the Russian media reported on a real 'green zone' identified in the Republic of Kalmykia in the maximum security penal colony No.2:  

"A prisoner of one of the colonies of Kalmykia has created a terrorist facility on the basis of the institution that since 2013 has attracted about 100 people", Svetlana Petrenko, a spokeswoman for the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, told the media on 18 December 2019. According to the agency, the law enforcement officers have already managed to detain 22 members of the unit – most were in the colony, five more were caught at large, and three were eliminated in Dagestan during a special operation. A case has been opened against the intruders – the Investigative Committee is also checking the actions of UFSIN Kalmykia.  

According to the agency, in 2013, a native of the Republic of Dagestan, who was serving a sentence for illegal arms trafficking, created his own terrorist unit and attracted more than 100 convicts. The Investigative Committee, the FSB, the FPSR, and the police were involved in the investigation of the crime, Petrenko said. So far, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation has initiated a case under Article 205.4 of The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, 'Creating and participating in the terrorist

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44 Riot in Khakassian IK-35 URL: https://zona.media/chronicle/bunt_ik35
community’ against only 22 people involved in the creation of the community. Most of them are still in the colony – five, who have already served their term, law enforcement officers detained at large in Dagestan, in the Krasnodar region, and in the Volgograd region. Three other members of the unit were killed in Dagestan when they resisted arrest.

At the moment, investigators are establishing the roles of each of the suspects and checking what crimes they may have committed as part of the community. "The investigation is taking active measures to identify other participants in the crime" the representative of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation said. So far, investigators have already searched the office of the deputy head of the UFSIN on Kalmykia, Petrenko said.45

This case is one of the most shocking in Russia. Details of how a maximum-security colony under the auspices of the leadership of the regional FPSR turned into a "green zone" were reported by Tsargrad TV:

“For almost six years, since 2013, there has been underground terrorist activity in IR-2 Kalmykia by the group, which included more than a hundred zeks (prisoners) – a sixth (!) of all serving sentences in this correctional facility. And some of them, including the leader and the founder, by the time of the liquidation of the criminal community, had already managed to free themselves and begun what they had been preparing for... The establishment of IK-2, which is a part of the General Directorate of the Federal Correctional Service for the Republic of Kalmykia, is a high-security colony. That is, the level of security and operational supervision there should be appropriate. But for some reason this proper level was up to standard... Towels, underpants, suits, and hats are made in this prison, as well as furniture and decorative boats, backgammon boards, and caskets. And then there was a fully-fledged terrorist unit, which had grown to a hundred-plus people by 2019! He created it in 2013, as the Investigative Committee points out, ‘for the purpose of propaganda, justification and support of terrorism’. He himself, however, a year later was released ‘with

45 Loktionova M. Terrorist cell: as a prisoner recruited 100 people. In the colony of Kalmykia uncovered a cell of terrorists of 100 prisoners. URL: https://www.gazeta.ru/social/2019/12/18/12872396.shtml
a clear conscience, went to his small homeland and ... immediately went underground, joining the militants, just as two of his relatives had done. Taking a different name and joining the ranks of the Islamic State, he rose to the rank of ‘emir’. ... In 2015, he was killed during an FSB special operation: according to the National Anti-Terrorism Committee, he managed to take part in a number of attempts on the security forces and in gang attacks on local businessmen, from which he extorted money to support illegal groups."

Meanwhile, the business, which was begun by the militants in the Kalmyk colony, continued to live and prosper. "I am not surprised that such a community has arisen in prisons," Reserve General Alexander Mikhailov, a former state security operative who headed the FSB’s Center for Public Relations in the 1990s, told Tsargrad. "On the one hand, there are such colonies, where leaders of different groups are specially assembled, primarily because they are thus easier to control. On the other hand, in such criminal communities a hierarchy has been built, rules have been established, people close in spirit and way of thinking gather there." However, there is another factor that contributed to the existence of the underground, according to Mikhailov: corruption. Communication with the outside world is through those who should limit it. The same is said in the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation.

"The leadership of the colony provided general protection to the members of the terrorist community for monetary compensation," the Investigative Committee told Tsargrad. In Kalmykia, Kabardino-Balkariya, Dagestan, the Krasnodar region, and the Volgograd region, large-scale investigations were carried out, including searches of suspects’ residences and those of their close relatives, as well as the office of the first deputy of Russia’s head of the Republic of Kalmykia." The post of the first deputy head of the republican administration since the end of 2015 is occupied by Colonel of Internal Service Viktor Grebennikov, who has been working in the FPSR system since 2002. Before being
appointed to Kalmykia, he had served in the correctional institutions of the neighbouring Volgograd region.

Taking into account the potential involvement in the process of one of the main employees of the regional department, and with the direct participation of the leadership of the prison, the scale of the cell’s influence became quite clear.

"Forced detention is ideal", says our source within the power structures, “people live together, compactly, in difficult conditions. If they are also bound by one religion, plus there is a kind of ‘preacher’, this is fertile ground for such things”.

The motives of criminals for joining the group were obvious, continues Tsargrad: “firstly, most of them received their terms for serious crimes (including having an extremist orientation), and secondly, belonging to the same religion and origin played a significant role”.

"Who needs them after they leave prison? No one. And then there's a man who says, ‘Brothers, I have an option for you, and you'll be fed, dressed-up and with money’. Standard recruitment, with only one difference: it didn’t take much to persuade anyone”, explains the source.

Accordingly, in the Russian colony – once again, under the watchful eye of the guards – a future replenishment for terrorists was being forged. And the investigation has yet to find out whom of the previously released inmates has travelled where.

So far, according to the SKR, only five people have been detained outside the walls of IK-2: three in Dagestan, one in Kuban, and one in the Volgograd region. According to our source, all of them tried to build on interaction with the underground operatives.

“It does not matter that the organiser himself has been eliminated; he left a successor”, says Tsargrad. “The main thing was that there were channels, goals and objectives. It was not possible to destroy the scheme thanks to simultaneous work on several fronts. First of all, the operatives from the central apparatus received the information
about what was happening in the colony. Then there were failures by employees involved in the corruption scheme. Finally, there was action from previously released members of the organisation, who were looking for terrorist contacts”.

The operational support was provided by employees of three agencies – the FSB, the Interior Ministry, and the FPSR (Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia).

Now all those who participated in the gang underground have been given new sentences and will most likely be distributed to other prisons – only with a special regime, where everyone will be kept under additional control.46

The preconditions for the formation of a ‘prison jamaat’ are that a colony hosts a high concentration of Islamist inmates and that among them is a passionate, talented, and educated preacher with experience in propaganda and recruitment activities. From there, a prison jamaat begins making its own demands on the administration of the institution and entering into conflict with the criminal world. Such grow through the addition of previously non-practicing Muslims and converts from other backgrounds. The latter may join the Jamaat in the hope of gaining the patronage of a strong group because of conflicts with other groups of convicts or to overcome pressure or isolation.

**Ideological resilience and ideological commitment to Islamist doctrine**

Extremist and terrorist ideological propaganda is present in different regions of Russia, often far from areas of highly populated by Russian Muslims. That is not surprising, as those sentenced to long prison terms for crimes of a terrorist nature or crimes of a common criminal nature can be sent to serve their sentences in Magadan region, Yamal, and other regions of the country.

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46 Stepanov A. Gangs underground of the strict regime: How terrorists were trained in the Kalmyk colony URL: https://tsargrad.tv/articles/bandpodpole-strogo-go-rezhima-kak-v-kalmyckoj-kolonii-gotovili-terroristov_231410
In prisons, some prisoners are beginning to promote ideas that are directly related to terrorist activities. As a result, criminal proceedings under Article 205.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation – ‘Public calls to carry out terrorist activities, public justification of terrorism or propaganda of terrorism’ – are being instituted in prisons. It is enough to examine the materials of the media and the press reports of the security agencies to see how frequent it has become:

On 5 April 2019, the press service of the FSB for the Vladimir region reported that in February 2019, the investigative department of the agency opened a case under Article 1 of Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code regarding a prisoner of IK-6. According to the investigation, while in pre-trial detention center-3, “because of his religious beliefs” he told his cellmates about the rightfulness of the activities of the banned terrorist organisation ‘Islamic State’, which is associated with the commission of explosions, murders, arson and other violent acts against non-Muslims.47

On 15 April 2019, the press service of the FSB in the Tver region reported that the Moscow District Military Court had found a prisoner of one of the colonies of the region guilty of Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation at an exit hearing. According to the agency, he attempted to form an "extremist cell adhering to the ideology of terror." He was sentenced to two and a half years in a maximum security prison.48

On 18 June 2019, the press service of the FSB for the Saratov region reported that a criminal case had been opened under Article 1 of Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code against a foreign national serving a sentence in one of the regional colonies. According to the investigation, while being treated in the regional tuberculosis hospital of FPSR, the man justified the activities of international terrorist organisations banned in Russia: Al-Kaida and

47 The prisoner in Melehovo called on his fellow inmates to fight terrorism https://progorod33.ru/news/47999.
48 In the Tver region, a prisoner was convicted of promoting terrorism: https://inform69.ru/news/proisshestviya/v-tverskoy-oblasti-za-propagandu-terrorizma-osudili-zaklyuchennogo.html
Tahrir al-Sham. He then continued to promote terrorist ideology at the city’s Engels Clinic. The man is currently in custody.\(^{49}\)

On 16 September 2019, it was revealed that in July, the Far Eastern District Military Court sentenced a native of Dagestan, serving a 24-year sentence in one of the colonies of the Krasnoyarsk region, to three-and-a-half years in a maximum security prison under Article 1 of Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code. The convict, who was serving a sentence for a number of particularly serious crimes, including those related to the organisation of an illegal armed group, reportedly justified the activities of international terrorist organisations and called for terrorism in the presence of other prisoners.\(^{50}\)

On 8 October 2019, the press service of the FSB in the Tver region reported that the Moscow District Military Court had found a prisoner of one of the colonies of the region guilty at an exit hearing under Article 1 of Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code. According to the agency, he attempted to form a "religious-extremist cell promoting the ideology of terrorism". He was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in a maximum security prison.\(^{51}\)

On 12 December 2019, the press service of the FSB in the Tver region reported that on 10 December, a sentence was handed down under Article 1 of Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code in respect of a prisoner of one of the colonies of the region. According to the agency, he made attempts to form, from among other prisoners, "an extremist cell adhering to the ideology of terror". He was sentenced to four years in a maximum security prison.\(^{52}\)

On 20 December 2019, the press service of the FSB for the Irkutsk region reported that the first Eastern District Military Court at an exit session in Irkutsk handed down a verdict

\(^{49}\) FSB officers detained a foreigner who called to imitate terrorists URL: https://nversia.ru/news/sotrudniki-fsb-zaderzhali-inosstranca-kotoryy-prizval-podrazhat-terroristam/

\(^{50}\) Krasnoyarsk convict gets additional term for calls to terrorism https://regnum.ru/news/accidents/2719610.html

\(^{51}\) FSB officers identified a convict who tried to set up a terrorist cell in a colony in the Tver region: https://tvergrad.ru/publication/sotrudniki-fsb-vychislili-osuzhdennoy-kotoryj-pytalsya-sozdat-terroristicheskuyu-yacheyku-v-kolonii-v-tverskoj-oblasti

\(^{52}\) In the Tver region, a prisoner tried to create a terrorist cell URL: https://vesti-tver.ru/dailynews/v-tverskoy-oblasti-zaklyuchennyh-pytalsya-sozdat-terroristicheskuyu-yacheyku/
relating to Part 1 of Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code, Part 1 of art. 280 of the Criminal Code (public calls to carry out extremist activities), and Part 1.1 of art. 205.1 of the Criminal Code (promoting terrorist activities) to a prisoner of one of the region’s correctional colonies. The defendant received a 14-year sentence, including the first six years in prison and the next eight years in a special regime colony. He was found guilty of repeatedly suggesting that other prisoners become members of ISIS, an organisation recognised as a terrorist organisation in Russia, while serving his sentence in a penal colony in the Irkutsk region from December 2017 to February 2018.53

Visiting a number of colonies at the invitation of the regional FPSR, I had the opportunity to communicate with persons convicted for extremist and terrorist crimes. I have also been interviewed several times as a religious scholar and have been asked to write commentary on materials from the colonies.

Extremist convicts had different backgrounds and had been convicted of various crimes. Psychologically, they were united by one thing: whether it was a terrorist convicted back in the 2000s for crimes committed during the second Chechen campaign, whether it was a young man who received his first term in the late 2010s, they were usually ideological supporters of a particular Islamist extremist or terrorist organisation. Despite the threat of a new term, they will persistently aim to prove to others – fellow inmates and even FPSR officers – the righteousness of their ideology, and to convince them of the correctness of these ideas, and, seeing interest, recruit and involve them in the activities of extremist or terrorist organisations.

Here are a few specific examples.

In one of the Russian colonies, a young man named D., born in 1995, an ethnic Tatar, convicted for the first time, was summoned to explain to the members of the disciplinary

53 IS recruiter sentenced to 14 years in prison in Irkutsk region: https://tass.ru/proisshestviya/7387601
commission a violation of the established order of serving the sentence in that institution. Before the meeting of the commission D. was notified that during the conversation, D., with the members of the commission, would be recorded on videotape, which is a requirement set out in the regulatory documents of the FSIN, and of which convicts are necessarily notified.

During the meeting of the commission and D.’s conversation with the prison officials, the convict made statements justifying the activities of the international terrorist organisation ‘the Islamic State’, and said that he was a Muslim. He had converted to Islam while serving his punishment in another colony, before being transferred to the one where the conversation took place. Persons who profess other religions, as well as Muslims who abide by the laws of the Russian Federation, are referred to as ‘infidels’ and ‘kafirs’; their murder is considered permissible. After his release, he planned to travel to the territory controlled by the terrorist organisation to fight against the Russian and Syrian armies. Here are a few snippets from this dialogue:

At the beginning of the conversation, the convict said that he refused to comply with the rules of internal order and requirements of the laws of the Russian Federation.

To the question: "What are you not satisfied with regarding the laws of the Russian Federation?", the convict replied: "Everything! Laws, rules and people. I know how to define myself. The right laws are in the Islamic State, ISIL." The verbatim conversation was as follows:54

S.S. As I understand it, your behaviour has not changed after our last conversation? Do you think you will determine how to behave, what to do yourself? Is that how it works?

54 D. - convicted, S.S., D.A., D.V., M.F. - FPSR officers, members of the disciplinary commission.
D. I know how to behave, how to identify.

S.S. Did your parents teach you or not?
D. No.

S.S. How do you know? Books?
D. I saw.

S.S. What did you see?
D. I saw how they behaved, how they communicated.

S.S. Where did you see that?
D. At the UC... It was.

S.S. A. So, is there the other way the convicts behave there?
D. Yes.

S.S. And how do they behave?
D. Just as I am now, they do the same.

S.S. And regarding the country have you decided where you want to go after your release? You didn't say anything. Have you decided where to go?
D. I know. Determined that a long time ago.

S.S. I just wonder what don’t you like about Russia in particular?
D. Everything!

S.S. Well, how, everything?!
D. In general, to all! Everything in it!

S.S. What is it about?
D. About the law.
S.S. And the people? Are people different?
D. And people are different, and the laws are different!

S.S. And what country suits you then?
D. The Islamic State.

S.S. What is the Islamic State country?
D. Islamic State. Have you heard of this?

S.S. No, I haven't.
D. ISIS. Where they fight.

S.S. I have not heard of such a state.
D. Have you heard about Muslims?

With regard to Muslims serving sentences in a penal colony, the convict said: “They are here, they are staying here and everyone is complying with your laws, your rules. That is, obey your ‘taguta’. And that's not right. The right laws are in the Islamic State.”

S.S. Heard about Muslims. Our Muslim community is very large. Everything is fine.
D. Here it is. They're here. And everyone's complying with your laws, your rules, right? So they obey your taguta?

S.S. Obey who?
D. They obey your rules.

S.S. What are our rules?
D.A. They follow their own rules at the same time. And it does not prevent

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55 “Tagut” is often referred to in Islamic sources in conjunction with the term “Jibt”. Jibt is everything that is worshipped except Allah. So-called sorcerers and foretellers. The jibt and the tagutom are idols. More broadly, these are falsehoods, which some people prefer monotheism only out of a sense of hatred towards Muslims. These were some Jews who said that Idolater Arabs were on a more faithful path than Muslims. Allah in the Koran cursed such people. - Jibt/Ali-zadeh A. Islamic Encyclopedic Dictionary. M.: Ansar, 2007. URL: http://darulilm.ucoz.ru/enciklopediya/ehnciklopedija.pdf
them from combining one and the other. And that's not right. That's not right.

The convict further said that after serving his sentence he planned to go to the territory controlled by the Islamic State to fight. Asked by a prison officer: "Why are you going to leave the Russian Federation to kill, blow up?", the convict replied: "Yes! Yes! I'm going to fight! On "their" side. I will kill "kafirs" and "infidels."

S.S. Well, okay, okay. You're going to the Islamic State, but I can't figure out where it is geographically?
D. Where? It is in ISIS.

S.S. There is no such country!
D. Well, no country, so what! There is a state!

S.S. So, there is the state. So it's got to be somewhere, right? Or is it virtual?
M.V. This is a terrorist organization, not a state.
D. This is the state!

M.V. This is not a state!
S.S. You know, it is recognized all over the world that they are terrorists.
D. It's all over the world...

S.S. It's not just in Russia.
D. So they cannot be understood by others, and vice-versa!

S.S. So you profess this radical orientation of Islam?
D. It's not radical!

S.S. What is it then?
D. It is your view that it is radical, that they are terrorists - not terrorists.

M.V. Do you know that this propaganda is prohibited by law?
D. Yes, this is your point of view!
S.S. And what, you set out to go kill someone, blow up, or what?
D. Yes! Yes! I'm going to fight!

SS. Will you fight on their side?
D. Yes! I'll fight on their side!

M.W. When is the end of your term?
D. In 2020.

M.W. It's not going to be this organization when you get out?
D. Will be!

S.S. And, what, you're going to kill everyone?
D. As "all in a row"?

SS. Well, how will you define whom to kill?
D. Kafirs.

S.S. Kafirs? Who are they?
D. Infidels.

Let's repeat: the convict knows that the video is being videotaped and talking to the prison officers – FPSR officers!

Another example: In one of the Russian colonies, a convict, B., born 1981, a native of one of the republics of the North Caucasus, serving a sentence for crimes committed during the second Chechen campaign, was in the educational work room together with other convicts watching and discussing television news.

The news featured a story about the actions of the international terrorist organisation the Islamic State (ISIS) in Syria, which drew condemnation from those watching. However, after hearing the discussion of this topic, he intervened in the conversation and announced his approval of the activities of the Islamic State. In particular, he called the terrorists of ISIS
"brothers" who go "on the right path, do jihad against the infidels and wicked"; he approved of the practice of committing terrorist acts against "infidels", and said that the one "who died in the war against infidels became a shahid". He shared his desire to join the Islamic State militants in Syria.

He said the following:

"Anyone who goes against the right Islam should be killed; carry out terrorist attacks against them. Whoever commits a terrorist attack against the infidels becomes a holy man – a shahid. It is good when the Islamic State mujahideens kill and defeat infidels, carry out attacks, and I will always defend my brothers who are fighting by doing jihad against the Kafirs; everyone who died in the war against the infidels becomes shahids. My heart shrinks when I see my brothers from ISIS being killed, and I really want to be in Syria, but I am not destined to be there because I am sitting in a colony, I have been locked up by kafirs for doing jihad against the infidels."

These examples show that those who are convinced of the righteousness of terrorist ideology, and indoctrinated into this ideology, are very open about it. They openly spread their beliefs without fear of receiving a new prison term. Of course, the leadership of the colonies, when such convicts come to them, try to isolate them from other prisoners. But it is not always possible to do that; at certain moments, these people still interact with other convicts and they don’t miss opportunities to conduct agitation.

The examples we have looked at are examples of open propaganda and justification of the activities of a particular terrorist organisation. This of course does not account for recruitment that occurs secretly, such that the administration of the colonies does not even know!

Secret recruitment activity is revealed in various ways: either in the course of sudden inspections, or in case of random incidents. The problem of the spread of terrorist ideology
remains a serious threat to the security of the state and society. When such people are caught and imprisoned, law enforcement agencies stop their activities ‘on the outside’, but they continue to spread the ideology and find followers ‘on the inside’.

Of course, in the last few years, experts, officers and a number of politicians have been talking about the need to organise a separate prison for terrorists, somewhere on the islands of the Arctic Ocean or in other hard-to-reach areas, but no formal decisions have yet been taken in this regard.

**Characteristics of the identity of a convicted person for a crime of terrorist nature and extremist orientation**

Psychologists with the FPSR (Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia), having conducted numerous studies, have identified common psychological qualities that characterise the personality of extremists and terrorists:

- asocial; nihilistic in relation to the existing social order;
- denying the value of human life in general (their own, other people’s, including loved ones);
- low self-esteem (or compensatory-overstatement), complicating the harmonious manifestation of abstract intelligence;
- dislike of people around them in general (those not sharing their ‘super-valuable ideas’);
- submissiveness;
- insularity, selectivity of communication;
- fanatical service of a super-valuable idea, up to the point of readiness for complete self-sacrifice;
- unrealised need for spiritual quest.
The dominant role of men in the hierarchies of terrorist or extremist groups is due to:

- A significant proportion of crimes committed on the basis of a radical religious ideology proclaiming the ‘primacy’ of masculinity;
- The use of physical force (in crimes against life and health);
- The need for self-training, referral skills and understanding of the way explosive devices work, the chemical properties of explosives, and the ability to prepare them to detonate.

The low rate of female crime does not indicate the insignificant role of women in the commission of these acts, which is manifested in the following typical directions:

- The use of women as suicide bombers;
- The use of women as recruiters;
- The use of women as public agitators, including on social media;
- The use of women as support staff.

Also, it is quite interesting to note the typical characteristics of personalities committing crimes of propaganda: an asocial attitude, moral degradation, and stable mental personality disorders, manifested in a public expression of negativity against the current government, law enforcement and other state bodies, as well as other social groups whose ideological beliefs are antagonistic from their point of view.

They have a high level of egocentrism, demonstratively shocking behaviour, which is an attempt to attract maximum attention to themselves (as a source and bearer of the ‘super-valuable idea’) and to acquire like-minded people in the ‘ideological struggle’. The criminal environment (the environment of convicts in the conditions of institutions) is perhaps the greatest place for the consolidation of these properties.

According to data provided by the FPSR of Russia, the main age of those convicted of terrorist and extremist crimes is from 18 to 38 years old. In view of this fact, convicts of
this age are subject to full control by the concerned departments and correctional services, and work is being done to identify criminal intent, as well as finding means of correcting convicts.

The most active adherents of Islamist ideology among the convicts are former members of illegal armed groups from the North Caucasus region, persons who previously studied at Islamic institutions of the Middle East, in Egypt, and previously trained in militant camps (on the territories of the Chechen Republic, Afghanistan, Syria, etc.). As a rule, regardless of the region where they serve their sentence, they gradually form groups of convicts, prone to the adoption of radical ideologies based on their psychological characteristics. They are then able to further adopt the norms of criminal subculture.

The similarity of the criminal subculture to the ideology of religious extremism (censure of the foundations of the constitutional order of the Russian Federation, indignation at social inequality, critical attitude to the tolerant attitude of representatives of other beliefs, origins, etc.) is able to unite these radical ideologies. In a correctional facility, the likelihood of such processes (the confluence of these ideologies) seems most obvious.

The transformation from one ideology to another, or the merging of them, leads to the transformation of established perceptions of the administration of the correctional institution, of the criminal world and its way of life, that pre-existent in the conditions of the correctional institution. In turn, this qualitatively reduces the potential of the operational units of the FPSR of Russia in achieving the tasks of operational and investigative activities (primarily in the fight against terrorism), as the internal structure of the Jamaats complicates their work. The foundations of conspiracy are strengthened, counterintelligence capabilities are strengthened, and the circle of participants expands.

The most typical links with extremism in the institutions of the penal system are manifested in offences like disobeying the lawful demands of the administration, harming the health of convicts on religious and ethnic grounds, holding hostages, riots, and group
hooliganism. In this regard, FSIN officers pay attention to the convicts involved in the commission of these offences and crimes, including those at large.\footnote{Yestokin A.P. Policy to counter extremism in prisons as part of Russia's national security strategy / Central Russian Gazette of Social Sciences. – 2015. V. 2. - p. 101-106; Kuleshov R.V. Theoretical and Methodological basis of disclosure and investigation of crimes in the sphere of extremist and terrorist activities::autoref. Dis.... Doct.Jur.science: 12.00.12/Kuleshov Roman Vladimirovich. -Rostov-on-Don, 2017. – p. 48}

It should also be taken into account that those who support radical Islamist movements and are serving sentences for extremist and terrorist crimes are not a single group, but are divided by researchers into different types. In the Russian Federation, such studies are still being carried out; their results have not yet been published, so in this case it is necessary to turn to foreign material.

In 2017, a field study of those convicted of extremist and terrorist crimes was conducted in Kyrgyzstan. This study aimed to analyse those convicted of terrorism and extremism and to develop and apply a classification. The main focus was on the classification of convicts in closed institutions. The study was conducted using five tools: a theological survey (profile); interviews with convicts; interviews with employees (their observations of changes); psychological techniques; and, in some cases, analysis of documents like judicial decisions. Interviews, theological questionnaires, and psychological testing were conducted by a working group with the entire contingent of convicts on a voluntary and anonymous basis. The total number of respondents convicted of terrorism and extremism in SSEP (State Service of Execution of Punishment) institutions of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan was 276.

As a result, the study proposed the following classification of those convicted of crimes of extremist and terrorist orientation and proposed the following classification according to the degree of ideology and tendency towards violence:

1. Militant extremists.
2. Ideological extremists.
3. Accomplices indirectly involved.
4. Repentant.
5. ‘Not amenable to the current fairly accurate definition’.

This is how Ezenamanova, an author of the study and a social scientist from Kyrgyzstan, characterises these categories: "A striking example of the representative of this [first] category is someone sentenced to life imprisonment ‘S.K.’, who explicitly voiced in the interview the need for ‘jihad’ towards all those who do not adhere to a radical religious and political ideology.

Admittedly, it is difficult for individuals to reveal their militant aspirations. During the study, we encountered cases where respondents answered interview questions and questionnaires consistently and psychologically convincingly, proving their non-involvement in terrorism and extremism. However, additional information from operatives indicated otherwise. Most often, these kinds of people turn out to be the most dangerous and intelligent leaders among terrorist groups.

For example, ‘K.I.’, sentenced to life imprisonment, displayed logic and consistency in asserting non-involvement in terrorist crimes. In addition, his profile, level of education, and intellect correspond to that of a person from the intelligentsia. At the same time, the legal terms on which he was twice convicted, and the comments of the SSEP operatives and the GKNB against him, show that he is very dangerous and has managed to play an important role, while in detention, in organising terrorist activities outside. An indirect sign indicating K.I.’s involvement in terrorist activities is the result of a psychological examination, according to which he, despite the long term his sentence and his disappointment with his life, is a strong personality with leadership qualities.
The next category of convicts, 'Ideological Extremists', was proposed on the basis of the presence of persons who were clearly less dangerous and not violent but at the same time had strong extremist beliefs.

In particular, this category includes a large proportion of Hizb ut-Tahrir's religious extremist organisation (REO), which does not support violent methods of achieving religious and political goals as long as the ‘worldwide Islamic state’ (caliphate) has not been created. However, its adherents in closed institutions have generally acknowledged their participation in proscribed organisations and their hostility towards the secular state.

In addition, this category includes others who adhere to and disseminate the ideology of radical Islamism, including ideas like the establishment of a caliphate, the introduction of sharia, and hostility to and rejection of secular norms in public life.

For example, the convict ‘T.K.’, in his interview, noted, "... To avoid terrorist attacks in the Kyrgyz Republic, Kyrgyzstan’s religious authorities need to turn to the leadership of ISIL and Al-Nusra (as a caliph) and ensure that there is no oppression of Muslims in Kyrgyzstan." In doing so, he effectively justified the objectives and the activities of these terrorist organisations by calling for their recognition.

Another category of prisoners can be referred to as ‘Complicit, indirectly involved’. The main sign of belonging to this group is the lack of radical ideology among those convicted and their lack of any intention to continue terrorist or extremist activities in the future. At the same time, these people could have previously taken part in terrorist and extremist activities.

The absence of radical ideology will be determined by answers during the interview and to the questions of the theological questionnaire.

A colourful example is ‘M.U.’ His confession included the following: "... went out on daawat for three days in Aravan... I had a charge from Daavat for one month, but after 15 days the charge fell... because I gamble cards, I know how to cheat... Life is interesting in
prison, fair decisions are made here... I want to go to Europe to Germany, I want to learn English."

Most of those convicted of attempting to travel to war zones abroad are young people, and the fact that they have not had time to commit terrorist acts and do not have sustained radical ideological beliefs makes it possible to single out this group and to apply separate methods of deradicalisation to them.

At the same time, there are reports that some persons who returned from Syria deliberately surrendered to the authorities and went in order to cooperate, no longer believing in jihadist ideology and not wanting to continue with terrorist activities, while also fearing for their security in the face of possible threats from formerly like-minded people.

Another typical example of a convict in this category is ‘S.M.’ The analysis of the data obtained against him shows that he is close to the criminal world in character and behaviour, but has previously assisted terrorist groups by providing them with shelter. In prisons he openly fought with the administration of institutions and also with those convicted of terrorism and extremism, but, in close contact with the latter, he gradually began to get closer to them. It seems that such persons should not be treated as ‘militant or ideological extremists’ and should not be held in the same cells.

The main purpose of preventive work with those convicted of terrorism and extremism is their deradicalisation. Sometimes, as a result of the administration’s deliberate work and internal motives (prison fatigue), some individuals move away from extremist ideology. We called this category ‘Repentant’. The criteria here are:

- Recognition of their crimes in the past and an open rejection of ideology and terrorist organisation;
- Readiness to cooperate with law enforcement agencies;
- Conformity with other external manifestations of behaviour and beliefs displaying sincere remorse.
One example of such a convict is ‘T.’ in IK-27, who spent two months in Syria as a member of the international terrorist organisation Jabhat al-Nusra, then was detained and sentenced to four years in prison.

During the interview, he spoke in detail about his involvement in terrorist activities, admitting his guilt and showing clear signs of having repented.

It is important to build timely and effective work with this category of prisoner to consolidate their correction and possibly use them to deradicalise other convicts. Also it is important to provide preventive activities outside the places of detention.

The last category of convicts is ‘Not amenable to the current fairly accurate definition’. The criteria for referring convicts here are:

- Total or pre-emptive denial of participation in terrorist and extremist activities, while the court’s verdict shows otherwise, and surveys reveal elements of radical religious and political beliefs;
- The absence of clear extremism in the results of surveys, if there are signs of a deliberate concealment of radical ideology;
- Refusal to participate in the study.

In the course of the study, respondents often rejected charges against them even though proven by courts. While it is impossible to rule out the possibility of an investigative or judicial error against them, we proceeded from the assumption that it is no more than the average for all categories of crimes. In most cases, convicts try to justify themselves consciously or unconsciously.

Thus, among those who do not recognise their participation in terrorism and extremism were persons sentenced to long terms.

In addition, the responses received from the representatives of this category are quite often contradictory; there is purposeful refusal to answer many questions related to the
identification of radical political and religious beliefs, and also the presence of radical statements. Some refused to participate in the study altogether. All of this may indicate attempts to conceal their true views.57

The analysis of media materials, a number of criminal cases and personal experience of communication with persons convicted of crimes of extremist and terrorist orientation convince us of the success of such classification and its full applicability to Russian realities.

The knowledge and understanding of the institutions and authorities executing the punishments, the characteristics of the identity of such criminals, their way of life, thoughts, and their traditions and customs should influence the decline in the spread of terrorist and extremist ideologies in prisons. This knowledge will help to prevent inter-ethnic conflict in institutions that carry out punishments and to increase the effectiveness of operational and investigative activities in solving crimes.

**Islamic sermons in prisons in the present**

The leadership of the FPSR (Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia) is well aware that the problem of spreading the ideology of extremism and terrorism in the colonies cannot be dealt with simply with forceful operational measures because this is a matter of ideology and propaganda.

Due to the worsening situation in the Russian penitentiary system, in recent years the leadership of the FPSR has paid considerable attention to interaction with Muslim Spiritual Administrations on spiritual and moral work among convicts and the prevention of extremist and terrorist ideologies.

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According to *The Independent* newspaper, all conditions were created in FPSR institutions for the representatives of traditional religious groups in February 2018.

“There are more than 660 prayer rooms for Orthodox, Muslim, Jews, and Buddhists in prisons and colonies. The number of religious communities in correctional facilities is also growing every year; it is currently more than 1,300. Serious educational work is also underway: last year more than 3,000 people were involved and attended lectures and sermons.”

About 100 letters were received, more than 250 personal consultations were conducted and more than 6.5 million pieces of religious paraphernalia were distributed,” the agency’s report said. In a number of regions, a new position has even appeared – an assistant head of the department for organising work with believers, usually appointed from among the clergy. There are ‘Sunday schools’ where convicts study the Bible, the Koran, the Torah, and other sacred books. Videos on religious topics are shown and sermons and stories about spiritual life are broadcasted. For Muslims festive salats organised in prisons.58

According to the official statistics of the FPSR, 61 mosques and more than 230 prayer rooms operate in the colonies and detention centres of the Russian Federation. There are more than 950 Islamic communities in prisons.59 For example, in the colonies of the Republic of Tatarstan there are seven mosques and seven prayer rooms, which are visited by more than 600 prisoners; in the Sverdlovsk region, there are seven mosques and seven prayer rooms, which are visited by about 500 convicts; in the Kemerovo region, there are three prayer rooms, which are visited by about 250 people.

58 Trifonov E. Religious extremists will be revealed and re-raised. The FPSR has begun spiritual education for jailers and prisoners: http://www.ng.ru/politics/2018-02-20/3_7176_fsin.html
59 The green zone. FPSR steps up fight against prison Islamists URL: https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2901612
At the federal level, systematic cooperation between Russia’s FPSR and Muslim religious organisations began in the early 2010s. In 2017, a working group on the interaction of Russia’s FPSR and centralised Muslim religious organisations was established. As of November 2019, four meetings within the working group had taken place. These included specialists from the representatives of the FPSR, Muslim theologians, imams of spiritual offices, representatives of public organisations, Islamist-focused scholars, rectors of Islamic universities, and foundations involved in implementation programmes.

For example, the second meeting was held on 20-21 November 2018 at the Bulgarian Islamic Academy (Republic of Tatarstan). The central issue of the working group’s meeting in Bulgaria was the approval of a list of Islamic literature to replenish the library funds of Penal and Correctional institutions. The Foundation for the Support of Islamic Culture, Science and Education reported on several years of work that had produced a large amount of Islamic literature for correctional facilities. For several years, experts from the Foundation had interacted with the FPSR, its territorial offices, and religious organisations, and had participated in scientific and practical conferences, as well as visited correctional institutions to familiarise themselves with the religious situation in prisons. With the support of the Foundation, works by authoritative Muslim authors were published which were then distributed in the Penal and Correctional institutions.

A recommended list of Islamic religious literature for the colonies was presented, designed so that prisoners could freely gain general knowledge about Islam by reading translations of the Koran (including braille for the blind), the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet Muhammad’s biography, and books on Islamic law, taking into account the different Mazhabs. There are many works on the list, by both classical and contemporary authors, in which the norms and postulates of Islam correlate with the realities of today. This literature will be published using funds from the Foundation for the Support of Islamic Culture, Science and Education and will be submitted to FPSR institutions.
throughout Russia. Books will be available both in libraries and prayer rooms of correctional facilities. It was also agreed that the working group at FPSR would monitor religious education in prisons, support religious figures for access to correctional facilities, and respond to difficulties of imams in prisons. In addition, the group will offer refresher courses for correctional officers. The audience will be introduced to Islamic history, the basics of Muslim culture and ethics, as well as psychological aspects of relationships with Islamic believers. For example, such courses were held in Krasnoyarsk from November 26 to 30 November 2018.

And at the last meeting, in Saransk of the Republic of Mordovia, which was held in November 2019, the participants of the meeting discussed a number of educational materials developed for the Penal and Correctional System and its convicts, and the ‘Teaching a Muslim in prison’ manual, a draft of religious-legal opinions (fatwahs) regulating the behaviour of convicted Muslims while serving their sentences in Penal and Correctional institutions, as well as a manual for the employees of the Penal and Correctional System on the basics of Islam.

In addition, it was decided to prepare the concept of an all-Russian magazine for convicted Muslims.

A list of Islamic literature has been compiled by centralised Muslim religious organisations to form library funds for Penal and Correctional institutions, which of course excludes the distribution of books containing ideas of prison-based radicalism, extremism, and terrorism.

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Another innovation was the proposal to create a mobile group, which will include the representatives of Muslim religious organisations, theologians and experts, who will carry out visits to places of detention and conduct preventive work with Muslim converts.\textsuperscript{61}

At the federal level, a number of agreements on cooperation between the FPSR of Russia and federal centralised religious organisations have been signed. Similar agreements have been signed in almost all regions of the Russian Federation between the Regional Offices of the Russian Federal Security Service and the Regional Spiritual Administrations of Muslims. They regulate the conduct of prison sermons by imams.\textsuperscript{62}

Imams visiting colonies must not only have good theological knowledge, in order to explain the differences between Islamic beliefs and their extremist interpretations, but also be good psychologists, in order to help Muslim convicts who aspire to correction, with wise advice and kind words. There are only a few such imams visiting prisons in Russia today.

The main areas of work carried out by imams who deliver prison sermons can be identified as:

1) Preaching on moral and ethical topics that address themes of abandonment, sin, and the inadmissibility of infringements on the rights and freedoms of others.

2) Visits to detention centres (also pre-trial detention centres) for spiritual and moral meetings with suspects.

3) Visits to correctional facilities (meetings in prayer rooms, clubs, as well as private conversations with convicts, both Muslims and those of all faiths and none).

4) Help in rehabilitation for freed Muslims.

\textsuperscript{61} Russia's FPSR and Muslim centralized religious organizations discussed issues of cooperation / FPSR of Russia. 18.11.2019. URL: fsin.rf/news/index.php?ELEMENT_ID-483977

\textsuperscript{62} FPSR strengthens cooperation with Muslim organizations / Russian Officers Information Portal. 29/03/19/ URL: http://oficery.ru/latestnews/22630
5) Conducting and participating in activities dedicated to the cause of spiritual mentoring among convicts.

6) Transferring religious literature to the colony.

Imams single out different categories of convicts, and different tactics for working with each.

a) Muslims who, in the absence of piety, have committed certain sins but then repent and so worry about their deeds that they try to atone, both in relation to God and people. Such people need support and attention, as well as explanations of various points concerning prayer or everyday life from the point of view of Islam.

b) People who are interested in Islam as a religion and want to get universal answers to certain questions from the point of view of Islam.

c) Prevention of extremism and terrorist ideas. It is no secret that for the last 20 years, Muslims convicted of extremist and terrorist crimes have appeared in Russian correctional institutions. Not everyone understands what to do with such convicts and how to carry out prevention with such people. But prevention is essential so that the extremist 'disease' does not spread to other convicts.

Imam candidates for colony visits are submitted in advance by the Spiritual Administration of Muslims for approval to the General Directorate of the FPSR of Russia in the region concerned. They are checked, then receive admission to the colony. A working schedule of visits to the colonies is drawn up. In every region of Russia, there is a position of an assistant head of the FPSR for work with convicts, and, as a rule, it is occupied by an Orthodox priest (only in a few regions of Russia is this position filled by imams and representatives of Buddhism); this official interacts with all clerics attending convicts. The head of a particular colony is also notified of the upcoming visit.
One of the prominent specialist practitioners, Rubin Munirov of the Kemerovo region, imam-hatib of the Munira Cathedral Mosque, highlighted the desired pattern of behaviour on the part of an imam visiting a prison:

"It is necessary, in conjunction with the educational department, to conduct consultations on films, books and activities and, under the agreement of the DUM and FPSR, to supply these informational products to the colony. So all the books... should be stamped with a stamp (from the mosque or spiritual administration of Muslims) and checked with the Ministry of Justice website for inclusion in the list of extremist materials. Also, everything that goes inside the correctional facilities should be inspected properly, even if the staff says that they trust the imam, it is necessary to insist that there should be mandatory inspection, thereby increasing the trust between the administration correctional facility and the imam. It is also necessary to read, together with someone from the educational department, explanations of the internal order. This is necessary in order to have a proper understanding of the permissibility of certain actions against convicts on the part of the Imam."

What do prison imams say in their sermons? Interfaith events involving imams and priest from the Russian Orthodox Church tend to address the universal aspects and vision of Islam. For example, the attitude of Islam to alcohol and drugs. Such activities are held for different categories of convicts and are designed to provide brief and general information about Islam. There are also themed events dedicated to particular topics. For example, the prevention of extremism, and the difference between Islamic beliefs and the teachings of certain groups.

In private meetings with specific convicts, either due to the desire of convicts to speak with imams, or the obligations of the correctional administration for the convict, appropriate instructions and recommendations are given on the basis of Islamic dogma. Such meetings are held in the presence of prison officers, and often recorded on video cameras.
If an imam meets with Muslims in a mosque or a club, they often give sermons and instructions. It is important that imams in such meetings do not stigmatise convicted Muslims for the crimes they have committed, or express censure and discontent towards them, because this will not help to reform them, but, on the contrary, will anger and turn them away from religion. An important theme of sermons and instructions is to encourage convicts to comply with the rules of internal order and maintain discipline, which requires the imam to have a good knowledge of Islamic theology and to find the necessary arguments to convince the convicts that in a situation of detention they do not violate basic Islamic tenets.

Another common format of the imam's work with convicts is the holding of various competitions, for example, on reading the Koran, or viewing the videos approved by the Spiritual Administration.

A very important aspect of working in the colonies is regularly visiting correctional facilities. If meetings are held at least once a week, there are serious successes, both in the study of religion and in the reform of convicts participating in these meetings.

"For several years now, I have been visiting the Maximum Security Correctional Colony No.4 in Isilkul every Saturday, - Asylbek Hamzin, the chairman of the local Muslim religious organization of Isilkul of the Omsk region, told us in an interview, - there are a lot of Muslims there, so the colony's leadership helped to organize a prayer room. There we hold classes on the basics of Islam and the Arabic language. Convicts are drawn to religion. And some convicts have serious successes. For example, one Tajik learned eight Juz of the Koran in six months."
Work on deradicalisation and the withdrawal of convicts from the influence of Islamist extremist or terrorist ideologies takes much more time. One of the imams visiting the colonies in the Republic of Tatarstan told the author that it took him eight years of work to remove one man from the Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami ideology. This took regular meetings including theological debates and arguments.

But not all spiritual administrations get to organise a regular visit to each colony by the imam. While in Dagestan, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and other regions where there are many imams and mosques, a particular imam is assigned to one or two colonies, in regions where mosques and imams are few, often one or two imams serve 20 or more colonies at a considerable distance (several hundred kilometres) from their mosques.

However, this work is very important. After all, one of the most important functions of the Muslim clergy today is to participate in the re-education of criminals. Why is this work significant? This is due to the fact that in the prison system of Russia we regularly meet convicts whom the representatives of destructive and extremist movements were able to mislead through the manipulation of Islamic symbols. It is not necessary to exaggerate their importance among the total number of Muslims in penal colonies, but it is also not necessary to downplay this number either.

The imam of the Kazan Yardam Mosque, Mukhtasib of the Moscow and Kirov districts of Kazan, chairman of the Yardham Foundation, member of the Public Observatory of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ildar Bayazitov, who has devoted many years to spiritual service in the colonies, notes,

“Criminal networks can be used to promote extremist teachings, and therefore Muslim clergy should understand the importance of working with convicted Muslims. The first and most important step that Muslim clergy should take in communicating with convicts today is to understand how people live in detention and what problems they are concerned about. It is important to
understand that an imam who comes regularly to penal colonies is one of the few free people who communicates with convicts.”

Modern imams need to understand their mission, and therefore they need to be a breath of fresh air for people who are incarcerated. Imams should think about how to help the detainees solve their problems, how they (with the help of the Almighty) can give hope to the convicts so that convicts will be able to change their way of life. This is the first and most important thing to think about when they come to penal colonies.

It should be understood that imams have a great responsibility, as they are representatives of traditional Islamic values for Muslims in detention. And the relationship they will be able to establish with convicts will have a direct impact on the perception of traditional Islamic values among convicts. Convicts should trust their imam precisely because of his humane qualities, they should not see him as an official who will simply dictate to them how to perform religious rites.

The re-education of convicted criminals such that they become law-abiding citizens should be conducted by reforming the morality of convicts, by forming an understanding that the world around them is not hostile, and that through religion they will be able to return to a normal and fulfilling life. This is the primary and most important element in the work of the Muslim clergy in correcting criminals.

The second and no less important point is that the Muslim clergy should provide convicts with the necessary religious literature and knowledge about Islam, i.e., to give lessons, advice, and books, and to deliver sermons. Imams must show that there is a lot of Muslim literature in Russia based on traditional values, and that prisoners can find answers to most of their questions. An imam must be able to show that the pamphlets of destructive sects are markedly inferior in their intellectual and social level to this traditional Muslim
literature. The imam must have good religious qualifications in order to prepare a suitable religious component in the education of convicts.

Thirdly, of course, imams should also have a sufficient level of secular education; i.e., it should be interesting to talk to an imam, an imam should be able to maintain the conversation, that is, to possess the necessary rhetorical techniques. All this is necessary for an imam to be an interesting interlocutor.

Representatives of the Muslim clergy should not only make every effort to shield convicts in penal colonies from the influence of destructive sects, but should also prepare convicts to ensure that they are able to return to a fulfilling life after their release. This is a very important and complex element in the work of the Muslim clergy. The fact is that everyone understands the prejudices that exist in society regarding former convicts. That is why the process of resocialisation of former convicts is an extremely important component of their reform.

The problem of resocialisation of convicts tells us that the work of the Muslim clergy with this category of citizens should continue after their release. It is clear that Muslim organisations need to open resocialisation centres for former convicts to reduce the likelihood of recidivism and reduce the chances that they will fall under the influence of destructive sects.

We see that the participation of the Muslim clergy in the resocialisation of convicts is clearly not limited to religious education, but also to the practical sphere, extending far beyond the boundaries of prisons. This suggests that imams who go to work in penal colonies must have certain human qualities and be widely educated in both religious and secular sciences. ²⁶⁵

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However, so far this level of service has been unattainable. Whereas in the Russian Orthodox Church, prison service is one of the most developed and powerful areas, well-provided for both methodically and personally, such that there is enough clergy, who care for one or two colonies, among Muslims, because of a lack of organizational unity (in Russia there are more than 100 Spiritual Offices of Muslims) and weak methods, imams who serve prisons are often forced to rely on only their life experience. They have a lot of other responsibilities, so to fully carry out their work in the colonies (which is not paid for by anyone and very heavy mentally and physically) is not possible for all imams. After all, an imam who visits prisons is a ‘soul doctor’.

Very often, when dealing with imprisoned Muslims, imams have to deal with recent converts with criminal or near-criminal backgrounds; quite often (but not always) there are quite radical adherents with a simplified and literalist understanding of Islamic values without regard to Muslim tradition and Islamic education. It is these attitudes that can easily lead to destructive and even extremist behaviour. Perhaps this is due to the fact that such a simplistic and radically literalist view quite easily divides the world into black and white and gives simple and easy answers to the complex challenges of modern life.

The second and equally important point is that Islamism is an ideology that reframes the social discontent of imprisoned people or those are part of a marginalised criminal environment. In a sense, Islamism, through populist calls for social justice, gives people a slender political ideology that the criminal world lacked. The criminal world had its own value system, its own culture, and its own rules, but it did not have its own political agenda. Islamism has this political agenda.

Experienced imams ask themselves why a political ideology like Islamism has become somewhat widespread in the prison environment. Why did communism, socialism, liberalism, anarchism or any other political doctrine not become the ideology that attracted the attention of people from the criminal environment? They give the following answer to this
question: the religious factor is key. It is the combination of religious symbols and political agenda that makes Islamism attractive. This is something that communism and socialism do not have.

In addition, communism, socialism, and liberalism are perceived as ideologies of states (whether the USSR or Western countries), and they do not have what it takes for a person who finds himself in the desperate situation of imprisonment and a complete loss of faith in human justice – there is no factor of transcendance. The marginalised environment of the criminal and prison world in many ways kills the faith in human justice and human systems of values. Accordingly, for people who find themselves in such an environment, religion is an outlet that opens up the prospects of the non-human world, the non-human system of values. When a person rethinks their life, they can find a need for a God. It is the presence of the religious factor in Islamism that turns out to be the first hook by which adherents to this ideology attract new adherents to their teachings. At the same time, since there are many young men in penal colonies who want to act after gaining faith, Islamism has its own political agenda. Power as a way to restoring justice can’t help but attract healthy men in the prime of their life.

Thus, it is the mixing of religion with politics or transcendental power with the earthly struggle for power that proves to be the reason why Islamism finds adherents in prisons. In addition, the desire to act for young and strong people, with a heightened sense of justice, is a perfectly logical aspiration. Spirituality and action are what Islamism offers. Another matter is that their understanding of spirituality and their programme of action turns out to be a trap. However, it is important that the adherents of this ideology consider their understanding of spirituality and action as correct. Therefore, in order to resolve the problem of extremist views, it is necessary to clearly understand the nature of the foundation of Islamism, which consists of the two factors outlined above.
Now, to solve this problem, what remains is to think about the understanding of spirituality and action that imams can offer people as alternatives to Islamist radicalism. Such an understanding represents traditional spiritual values and the ability to act in a constructive, peaceful, and much more useful way. In this case, it is appropriate to talk about socially oriented work through which Muslims serve wider society. The bottom line is that Muslim organisations, in addition to spiritual and ceremonial work, need to carry out active social and charitable work.

The reason for the popularity of destructive currents lies in the fact that they effectively use the rhetoric of social justice. It is through the manipulation of the topic of social justice that they manage to attract young converts and encourage them to take all sorts of action. For Islamist ideologues, the obvious truth is that young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, will have the topic of social justice close to heart, just as they will appreciate the idea of socially just acts carried out in the name of the highest religious ideals.

That is why traditional Muslim institutions need to show young people, including those in penal colonies, that true spirituality lies in achieving the contentment of the Almighty. And that Islam has always been characterised achieving Allah's contentment through creative work, primarily in order to overcome people’s own vices, and beyond that through the admonition of others to evade sins and strive for the contentment of Almighty.

What is also very important is people who can demonstrate to Muslims living in penal colonies that Islam does not require confrontation with the social environment, shocking people with a specific perception of Islam. On the contrary, it is necessary for people to see that they can feel safe next to Muslims, that where Muslims are, there is order and propriety. Muslims should not be expected to be a threat, but vice versa – Muslims are to be seen as people who can serve as examples of creative work, calm behaviour, and high moral qualities. Young Muslims who seek to practice their religion in penal colonies should be
asked to question their own spiritual growth, struggle with their vices, have a good attitude towards others, and practice the formation of such behaviour.

In addition to all this, it is also necessary to pay attention to the fact that for young Muslims, especially converts, it is important to find themselves at ease with their religion not only through internal work, but also through their impact on society. As has already been said, emissaries of a number of Islamist groups are using this desire of young people who are in detention to infect them with extremist views. However, the task of people who work with convicts today is to convince these young people that it is possible to act in a constructive way to help society. After all, you can do socially useful work even when in prison.

First, it is possible to help other convicts – the elderly and the disabled. Secondly, it is possible to actively participate in public prison life. Thirdly, one can work and help orphanages and nursing homes by sending, for example, hand-made wooden kitchen utensils. Fourthly, if there is a prayer room or mosque in the penal colony, it is possible to work together to improve the place and support those who have just come to religion. If desired, one can find many forms of socially useful work, which can engage the convicts. This is a matter of desire.

It is equally important that convicts see that the representatives of the Muslim clergy who regularly visit them seek to help them sincerely. The clergy should make every effort to facilitate the stay of convicted Muslims in penal colonies and, importantly, to help them prepare for life at large.

In the formation of religious education in penal colonies, the role of imams serving in prison is very significant. It is important that they understand and communicate to the convicts with whom they are in contact the ideas of Muslim social service, as this idea can become an alternative to extremist and destructive views, and can turn the energy of young Muslims into creative sources of socially beneficial action. The imam himself, as a
representative of one Muslim religious organisation or another, must be acutely aware of his activities in prison as an element of social service. Only then will this work be effective, both in reforming convicts and in preventing extremism. Understanding their work in this area as ‘social service’ should be expressed in the fact that representatives of Muslim organisations should strive primarily to benefit convicts as people who, for various reasons, find themselves in difficult circumstances.

It is the correct attitude that is the key to success – the Muslim clergy comes to the convicts not to order them to do anything but to help them. Only this attitude will help reform convicts and prevent extremism.

As the Kazan imam Ildar Bayazitov rightly points out,

"You can form as many slender and well-founded theological ideologies as possible, but it is not only the content of the message, but also the moral image and authority of the person who voices the message that is important. In other words, until the representatives of the official Muslim clergy become close and understandable to the majority of the population, including in the penal colonies, it will be very difficult to popularise traditional Islamic values and resist political populists who use Muslim slogans."

**What the convicts ask an imam and what he answers**

The conditions and treatment of convicts are important elements of their correction. Many Russian colonies have created favourable conditions for people of different confessions. In prisons in the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia you can find mosques and churches (and once the author saw how for a convicted citizen of Israel in Russia, with the help of a city synagogue, the administration of one of the colonies of the strict regime created a small Jewish prayer room), and people are allowed to exercise the right to free religion.

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In our society, unfortunately, there is a prejudice that citizens who are behind bars are people lost to a thoroughly law-abiding life, that they are dangerous and should not be trusted. However, experience shows that most people behind bars are just confused citizens who are capable of reform. One of the important points for reform is having a humane attitude towards them, humane in both the domestic and psychological senses of the word. Benevolence and sincerity are the most important factors in working with convicts.

For any imam who is going to work with convicts, first of all, it is important to understand what problems concern the convicts, and how an imam can be useful to them. An imam should not be seen as a representative of the authorities, coming to educate them and engage in moral teachings, but rather an understanding person who has come to help. This is a very important condition in the work of the Muslim clergy with people who end up in penal colonies.

This complicity in the lives of convicts should be expressed even in small things. For example, it is always important when visiting prisons not to come empty-handed, but with treats. This applies to both private visits and holidays. On holidays for Muslims, for example, on Kurban-Bayram, the convicts must receive halal meat so that they too feel the spirit of the holiday.

The representatives of the Muslim clergy who work in penal colonies should try to make every effort for the benefit of the people who are behind bars.

This direction is an element of social service for two reasons. The first reason is that the representatives of Muslim organisations help convicts directly, that is, they seek to benefit directly in penal colonies. The second reason is to help re-educate convicts and prevent extremism, the imams helping the society as a whole, thereby reducing recidivism and reducing the extremist threat.

Understanding their work as a service to society will help imams who work with convicts to build their activities in the right way. Only after the convicts realise that the person
who came to them from the official Muslim organisation, helps them, takes care of them - only then will the authority of his word increase, only then will they listen to him.

A person who speaks to convicts in a clear and accessible language, a person who helps to solve their problems - it is this person who will be able to later explain to the convicts how to understand their past mistakes and correct themselves, and also to protect them from the influence of destructive religious directions. Although, it seems that he may not even have to explain it because if he by his behaviour can become an example for convicts if he can unite them around him, help those who seek justice and want to embark on the path of correction to be successful law-abiding citizens, the very question of reoffending and communication with extremists who set up convicts against their society will not arise for the convicts.

The factor of one's example and authority, which can be obtained through social service, is a powerful tool against any criminal and extremist heresy. Discussion of theological, ritual and philosophical-religious issues should be the second stage of work. And this second stage will be as successful as the first stage.

There is another fundamental condition, without which the success of the first stage is impossible - it is sincerity. To work with convicts one should be a person who sincerely believes in the importance of this work and who sincerely wants to help. People in the penal colony will understand very easily if the person who came to them is not sincere and that he is only formally treating his activities.

Social work cannot be realised without a genuine desire to help. After all, the purpose of a clergyman working in a colony is not to manipulate the minds of convicts, but to help them. It is only through such service on the part of the Muslim clergy that the perpetrators can be corrected. This is the cornerstone of the work of imams. And, by the way, it concerns not only work in the prison environment, but also work in general - without sincere attitude to the work, it is better not to go into the spiritual sphere at all.
The main tool of the imam performing prison service is the wise pastoral word. Convicted Muslim believers are concerned about many specific issues, which are how not to violate Islamic religious regulations in prison, how Islamic norms can be combined with the internal regime, whether it is a sin to forcibly violate the Sharia law and the Prophet's Sunna.

The Imam must know the Koran and hadiths well enough to answer them. Here are some of the questions of Muslims in detention and the answers to these questions given by imams, as an example.

The question is: Is it permissible for a Muslim prisoner to defer some of the mandatory prayers to make up for it if it is due to the conditions of imprisonment? Or: is it possible to combine all 5 namaz in one to perform them on the bed after 10 p.m., if in the daytime it is not possible to perform namaz because of meetings, works, roll call. How to properly understand the term "combination of namaz"? When is it permissible? And, if a person combines two namaz, assuming that then there will be no opportunity for their timely execution, but then there is an opportunity to perform them in time, then what is the situation of the combined prayers? Is it necessary to remake the second, matched with the first namaz?

Answer: One of the necessary conditions for namaz is the advent of time. Therefore, you should try to perform namaz on time as much as possible. Even in prison. But, if there is a danger of being punished, you can postpone namaz for later discharge. The fact that someone does not like our actions cannot be an excuse for us to give up namaz. A good reason is only physical violence or the real threat of it. Namaz, which had been missed because of the difficulties of imprisonment, should be carried out per the appropriate order.

The question is: If during the day and evening there is no opportunity to perform namaz promptly, then perform them on the bed consistently from the first to the last.

Answer: If you do not know at what time the namaz will be allowed, or there are difficulties due to the change in the time of namaz, then you need to
perform it at the earliest opportunity. If it was executed on time, you absolved
yourself of responsibility. If not, the prayer is left for "later" as a debt.

The question is: Are Friday prayers mandatory in detention if there is no
mosque, permit or possibility to carry out Friday prayers?

Answer: One of the conditions of Friday's namaz is the freedom of a
Muslim. The prisoner does not have this condition, so Friday's namaz is not
obligatory for him. Instead of Friday's namaz, you should perform a midday
(az-zuhr) namaz.

The question is: We are not allowed to move from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
Therefore, we do not have the opportunity to make small and large ablutions
at this time. So, there are difficulties with night and morning prayers. What
would you recommend? Is it possible to use tayammum (sand wipe in the
absence of water)?

Answer: If you cannot do small or large ablutions at this time, it means
that you cannot get water. (This is similar to the absence of a bucket or rope if
there is a well). So you have to use tayammum.

The question is: The food that is prepared by prisoners contains illegal
food. What should we do? Are there any exceptions for us Muslim prisoners?

Answer: You are not allowed to eat food that you believe is made from
illegal foods (such as pork). You can eat everything that is made of flour,
cereals, vegetables, fruits. If food is cooked on a single menu, find out which
part of it is illegal, and eat when the allowed food is handed out. Work out your
system of behaviour for this. If illegal products are contained in all the dishes
given to you, then eat to the extent that is enough to maintain life. It's forced.
And the compulsoriness turns the forbidden into the permissible.

The question is: Among prisoners, it is customary to address each other
not only by name but also by nicknames. How does religion look at inventing
nicknames and appealing to people by nicknames?

Answer: The prohibition in Islam on the appropriation of nicknames is
related to the fact that offensive nicknames hurt and insult the honour and
dignity of people. As for the Prophet, assigning nicknames to his companions
that they liked is a well-known fact.
Thus, the Messenger of Allah, called Abdurakhman ibn Sahra Abu Hurayra, which means "father of kittens" because Abdurakhman ibn Sahr loved cats. Inventing nicknames that people don’t like is a sin. This is stated in the Koran in the sura "al-Hujurat" ("Rooms") in verse 11: "O those who believed! Let some people not mock others, because it may be that they are better than them. And let some women not mock other women, because it may be that they are better than them. Do not offend yourself (each other) and do not call each other offensive nicknames. It's bad to be called a wicked man after he's believed. And those who do not repent will turn out to be lawless." 67

Approximately such questions are most often addressed to imams by convicts and about such answers are received.

Significant work has also been carried out by the Centre for Islamic Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, whose specialists have published more than 30 theological pamphlets over the past four years aimed at exposing extremist and terrorist Islamist organisations and encouraging Muslims to be creative, such as:

- Labour in Islam.
- Custom as a form of Islam.
- Tablig is an inside look.
- The enigma of Ibn Taimyi.
- A correct understanding of jihad.
- A correct understanding of predestination.
- Patriotism in Islam.
- Secularity and Islam.
- Misconceptions of modern Harijits.
- Hizb ut-Tahrir misconceptions, etc.

They answer these difficult questions with the answers to the Islamic system of evidence. The brochures are anti-extremist, which has greatly assisted imams in their ministry. These works have been praised by FPSR, anti-terrorist commissions and have been replenished in many regions by the libraries of prison mosques.

**Work on deradicalisation and resocialisation of released convicts**

As noted, it is important not only to ensure that the spiritual needs of Muslims in detention are addressed and to work counter-propaganda in the colonies to prevent the spread of the ideology of extremism and terrorism on a pseudo-religious basis. It is also important not to leave such people after the end of their sentences and release. After all, according to the statistics of the FPSR, about two-thirds of all convicts sit for re-offending, i.e. are repeat offenders who could not realise themselves after their first term. And the role of clerics in this process is very important because traditional denominations have great creative potential not only in blocking extremist influence but also in reducing recidivism by correcting the mentality of offenders.

We have already said that even those convicted of extremist and terrorist crimes fall into at least five different categories, what can we say in general about the followers of Islam, serving sentences in the Russian colonies. It must be understood that they are rather heterogeneous groups, each of which needs its approach. Russian researchers I.V. Leskov and S.Y. Syazin rightly note that “for all their cultural commonality in the global plan as representatives of Islamic civilisation, Muslims born and raised in rural settlements and small towns in the territories of traditional for their ethnic settlements and Muslim indigenous inhabitants of large cities and megalopolises of Russia with their multicultural population differ significantly.

When it comes to migrants who have come to megalopolises or cities, they differ in their attitude to the host territory. It has been repeatedly noted that not all migrants seek to
integrate into the host communities of large Russian cities (megalopolises, agglomerations). Many are focused on taking advantage of the opportunities and resources provided by the host territory to extract the best possible benefit for themselves and, having earned the desired money, having received the necessary benefits, to go to their home country (or to the countries of the "far abroad"), already being in a different social and property status. The other part of the representatives of the group, on the contrary, seeks to fully integrate into the local community.

"Local" Muslims, born and raised in the multicultural environment of big cities and megalopolises, in most cases have a different attitude to their territory of residence."^{68}

On this basis, among Muslims (and/or representatives of peoples whose culture is based on Islamic traditions) living in large Russian cities, it is possible to distinguish at least three significantly different concerning the processes of resocialisation groups:

- Visitors who are focused on temporary stays in the host territory use the opportunities and resources it has provided to improve their material or social situation and subsequently move beyond it.
- Visitors seeking to fully integrate into the local community.
- "Local" Muslims (and/or representatives of peoples whose culture is closely linked to Islamic traditions) born and raised in the multicultural environment of large cities and megalopolises.

And these groups, in turn, are divided into several subgroups - the first two groups separate into two subgroups each:

- Urban residents (rarely from rural areas) with high levels of education and/or qualifications;

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People from urban and rural areas with low levels of education and/or qualifications.

Two subgroups can also be identified inside the third group:

- "local" natives of the big cities and megalopolises themselves;
- "local" natives of regional cities and rural settlements surrounding large cities and megalopolises (many of which are among the "pendulum migrants" working or simply closely related to large cities and megalopolises). The researchers note that the representatives of these groups differ significantly in mentality, tend to follow different norms and practice social behaviours implemented by significantly different schemes.

This is extremely important to take into account when choosing a strategy to resocialise those released from prison. "Speaking of Muslims convicted of crimes and served (or serving) sentences - I.V. Leskova and S.Y. Siazin note - we can assume that the very structure of crimes in each of the groups designated by us will differ.

Thus, we are faced with several completely divergent resocialisation processes.

These are at least:

1) resocialisation of people released from detention from other territories into the diaspora communities living... in big cities;
2) resocialisation of the released from detention of immigrants from other territories into the social networks of host communities ... of big cities
3) resocialisation of the released natives of Moscow and other big cities into the social communities of Moscow and other big cities.

Thus, it can be argued that there are types of Muslims both serving sentences and released from prison, whose cultural affiliation is important for the success of resocialisation; and
there are types of Muslims whose resocialisation is important in the type of situation in which it is carried out."

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It is important to take into account a lot of factors - local Muslims or visitors, having higher education or not, ethnic Muslims (by belonging to peoples traditionally professing Islam) or practice, with a secular worldview or with a religious one, what crime they committed. It depends, first of all, on who can be involved in the process of resocialisation: relatives, ethnic social associations, imam and Muslim community of a mosque, social services, charitable and other social organisations.

Hence the need to consider resocialisation with two phases of its implementation: the penitentiary and the post-penitentiary.

At each stage there are:

- Its set of goals, tasks, means of impact;
- Its list of organisations (subjects) assisting convicts and those who have served their sentences in training, employment and resocialisation in general.
- Gender is also imposed on this, as resocialisation programs should cover both men and women convicted of crimes or offences.

"Based on the above facts, it is necessary to organise the process of successful resocialisation of a person who returned to the metropolis after serving his sentence in prison:

- First, to identify the real-reference layer (or social group) of the inhabitants of the metropolis (for which it is desirable to create a typology of those released from prison based on their character reference);
Secondly, to determine which segment of the inhabitants of the metropolis (which of the social groups) should become a reference for them to be carried out in a socially favourable direction;

Thirdly, to form an environment (or platform) of resocialisation within which an effective social (not necessarily physical!!) contact of a person undergoing resocialisation can be made with a designated reference group, with the participation of existing agents (or channels) of resocialisation.

In other words, - the researchers conclude - it is necessary to form a platform for resocialisation with predetermined characteristics, taking into account a comprehensive analysis of the factors of self-organisation of the territorial community, where the resocialisation process will take place and its social capital, which has a positive impact on the effectiveness of the coexistence of the territorial community with the surrounding territories. The dominant factor in the self-organisation of the territorial community may be the desire of the residents themselves to consolidate in the matter of the improvement of their territory and the willingness to accept former prisoners and, if possible, to provide them with the possible strength assistance and support in the process of resocialisation."

However, such an environment is not created in all regions of the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia. Russian society is often not ready to accept the released convicts into their environment, treats them with suspicion, perceiving them as potentially dangerous persons. The same treatment of convicts is most common among Russian Muslims.

"Since about 70% of those serving their sentences in MLS in the Kemerovo region are not Russian citizens, most of them leave the region for release and the problem of resocialisation, as such, does not exist," says the first deputy mufti of the DUM Rubin Munirov, a member of the Public Supervisory Commission for the Kemerovo Region. " However, there are problems when they ask us to help settle down after their release. This

70 There, p. 207-208.
topic is very important and requires more in-depth consideration because today a lot of people serving sentences are ready to enter society. For example, a large relapse is due to these shortcomings and neglect of the issue." \(^{71}\)

Systematic work towards the resocialisation of the Spiritual Administrations of Muslims in the regions of the Volga, Urals and Siberia is practically not carried out due to the lack of personnel, finances and experience. Perhaps the only exception is the Republic of Tatarstan, where in cooperation with the Anti-Terrorism Commission, the Center for Islamic Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, the Republican Spiritual Administration of Muslims, Kazan Federal University and several public organisations they have been building a similar system over the past five years.

The autonomous non-profit organisation "Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation" in the Republic of Tatarstan plays an important role in the process of resocialisation of released convicts, including those served for extremist and terrorist articles. It assists in employment, primary treatment, collection of documents, simple legal services.

"Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation" ANO was registered by the Russian Ministry of Justice's Office for the Republic of Tatarstan in June 2014. The reason for the creation of "Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation" ANO is the high urgency of the problem of resocialisation of persons who have served their sentences in prisons.

According to available data, about 16,000 residents of the republic are in prisons from open sources. Of these, a significant proportion are men and women between the ages of 18 and 45, i.e. people of the most socially active age. At the same time, the issue of

resocialisation of these citizens after their terms have been served is the most acute. Over the past 5 years, the number of convicts in need of work and household equipment has increased by 4.5 times, and the number of convicts who have lost socially useful ties has increased by 31%. It is no coincidence that 24 per cent of those currently incarcerated have a second conviction and 21 per cent have a third or more conviction. The initiators of the "Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation" ANO have experience in providing informal assistance to former convicts, in particular, over the past five years they have employed more than 70 people in enterprises and other organisations of the Republic of Tatarstan. At the same time, the problem of resocialisation of former convicts is of great public importance and requires a systematic approach.

In response to this need, the Centre for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation has been given legal status, and a programme of activity has been developed that includes:

1. the formation of a system of social support for citizens struggling to adapt;
2. professional orientation and recruitment of those serving sentences;
3. official employment of those who have served their sentences.

"Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation" ANO is actively working in the Republic of Tatarstan to rehabilitate former convicts. During its work, the Centre has assisted more than 300 people released from prison.

About 12,000 convicts are serving their sentences in the correctional institutions of the Republic of Tatarstan, and up to 4,000 people are released every year. At the same time, correctional facilities are replenished with the same number of inmates, of which more than 65% receive a term, not for the first time.

At the same time, people have to face certain problems after their release from correctional facilities: they have nowhere to go because of the loss of housing; they often
have severed kinship, friendship and social ties. At large, convicts are expected to face problems of employment, social inequality and medical care. Some of them return from despair, having committed a crime.

That is why one of the biggest problems of our society is the social rehabilitation of convicts and the prevention of recidivism crimes.

"We believe that the shortest way to prevent crime is the timely employment of a convict. This slogan is fundamental in the recent actions we have held, as we not only provide hot food and clothing but actively promote the employment of those in need," the informational materials of Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation ANO say.

The path to early liberation is through labour. For almost any convict, the main goal is parole. In turn, parole does not guarantee further employment, often parolees may not always successfully dispose of their release. So, out of 12.5 thousand about 50% of those convicted in the Republic of Tatarstan had already been released under parole, which did not affect their re-education. Unlike parole, the re-education of convicts through correctional work makes the rehabilitation process more effective. A notable difference in correctional work is that the convict continues to serve a criminal sentence at large under the supervision of the employees of the penal system, paying the state from 5% to 20% of his income, thus reimbursing material and moral damage to the victims. At the end of the criminal punishment, instead of a dependent, the society receives a socially rehabilitated person. Correctional work is thus more effective in resocialisation than getting out on parole.

The timely employment of ex-convicts directly affects the number of repeat offenders. However, despite the huge demand of the labour force, it is almost impossible for a person with a criminal record to find even the most unclaimed work. "Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation" ANO is engaged in the search for work with subsequent employment. Our wards, released under the correctional program, undergo an adaptation program in organisations that have entered into a partnership agreement with the Center. They work in
agriculture, construction, light industry, transport maintenance stations, metal and wood processing plants. There are also examples of becoming your own successful business. We believe and affirm that the shortest way to prevent crime is the timely employment of a convict. Unlike parole, where the convict is granted to himself and faces previously mentioned problems, correctional work allows to control the integrity of the convict at large," the informational materials of Center say.72

Equally important is not only the assistance in obtaining social support, housing and work for Muslims released from prison. Psychological assistance is also important, and in case of those convicted of extremist or terrorist crimes, theological assistance is important. It consists of deradicalisation of convicts both during their detention and after release, working with relatives, children and social environments on deradicalisation and psychological and educational correction of behaviour.

One of the interesting Russian examples of work on deradicalisation of adherents of extremist movements, convicts who profess Islam, their socialisation after liberation, as well as work with relatives of such people and other categories of citizens, is the "Dialogue" Informational and Advisory Center, which operates at the Resource Center for the Development of Islamic Education at the Institute of International Relations of Kazan Federal University.

It was established with the assistance of the Anti-Terrorism Commission of the Republic of Tatarstan to rehabilitate and engage those who had previously participated in extremist organisations.

Thus, to neutralise the influence and reduce the activity of destructive Muslim sects in the Republic of Tatarstan, the specialists of the "Dialogue" Informational and Advisory Center identify the following areas of activity:

72 The ELN's official website, the Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation, URL: https://centtra.ru/
- Individual psychological counselling of former and current members of various destructive religious cults, as well as their close relatives, aimed at removing them from the influence of destructive ideology and harmonious inclusion into real society;
- Individual explanatory talks on Islamic theology and scientific Islamology, legal advice;
- Training courses, roundtables and seminars for a wide range of stakeholders on these issues are held at the KFU Resource Centre;
- Work to prevent religious extremism on social networks (publishing posts, developing and video demonstrations);
- Educational work in Muslim parishes of the municipal regions of the republic, including on such issues as child and family psychology, assistance to families left without a breadwinner as a result of the activities of destructive cults;
- Adaptation work with families of those convicted of extremist and terrorist crimes;
- Preventive work among students and schoolchildren (thematic speeches, lectures-talks);
- Development, review and publication of specialised literature, video shooting;
- Training of specialists on this issue.

To achieve its objectives, the "Dialogue" Informational and Advisory Centre attracts specialists in a wide range of related disciplines: psychologists-practitioners, academic scholars of Islamism and religious scholars, active clerics of Muslim faith, lawyers, employees of state and public organisations.

The main focus of the "Dialogue" Informational and Advisory Center is to conduct targeted anonymous conversations with current members of international terrorist organisations who doubt the ideology of these sects and plan to withdraw from their membership, to exercise the reassurance of Muslims who sympathise with a particular extremist group, to assist relatives in creating conditions conducive to the withdrawal of their loved ones from the influence of destructive religious ideologies. At the same time, it should
be noted that the work with current and former participants of various destructive cults is also carried out at the pre-investigation stage (with the condition of ensuring the anonymity of the person’s appeal to the informational and advisory centre), at the stage of investigation or pre-trial detention, as well as while serving his sentence in the FPSR system of Russia.

It must be said that such activities are long-term. The key factor here is not so much the doctrinal counter-breaking arguments, but the fracture of the long-imposed perceptions of the hostility of the world around us.

These ideas are one of the foundations of a radical worldview. Any extremist doctrine postulates about the hostility of the world around us, the impossibility of building any partnerships. And the actions that break this pattern and allow you to see the employees of the state bodies as normal, living people who can sympathise, experience, support and need it themselves, affect very strongly.

Over the three years of its existence, the centre's staff conducted more than 150 hours of individual consultations. In most cases, the respondents were supporters of the international terrorist organisation Hizbut Tahrir al-Islami, as well as their families, the wives and mothers of those convicted of involvement in the organisation. The consultation is conducted on condition of anonymity. Part of the consultation, in close cooperation with the Anti-Terrorism Commission in the Republic of Tatarstan, was conducted in detention facilities, with persons suspected or convicted of involvement in the activities of Hizbut Tahrir al-Islami.

The nature of consultations can be divided into two categories - theological nature and psychological nature. Consultations of a theological nature involve consideration of the distorted religious provisions that guide the proponents of destructive religious movements into recruiting new members to their ranks. Presenting alternative points of view based on the writings of internationally recognised in the Muslim world authorities on ambiguous issues of theology gives respondents the ground to rethink established attitudes, which can
serve as a reason for abandoning the ideology of non-traditional religious movements. Psychological counselling is aimed at family members of those involved in religious activities. The thematic content of these meetings contains consideration of communication issues, building reliable kinship ties as an element of resocialisation of a person involved in a religious cult.

As of October 2019, 17 persons had been removed from the influence of the international terrorist organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami as a result of such work, of which 6 were inclined to appear. Nine women are inclined to participate in group classes and individual psychotherapy. The analysis of the available information allows us to expect a significant outflow of its members in the future.

On an ongoing basis, the Center's specialists provide on-site consultations to the activities of municipal interagency working groups on the prevention of terrorism and extremism. The topics of the seminars are practical and aim to develop effective models of interaction with individuals of the "special attention" category, as well as their families. To date, these seminars have been held in ten districts of the country.

The analysis of individual consultations conducted during the entire existence of the centre often points to the psychological background of radicalisation of the individual on religious grounds - problems in the family, childhood trauma, issues of self-realisation, communication and socialisation and more. The need of the Muslim community to receive professional psychological assistance taking into account Islamic values and religious outlook, as well as the desire to develop appropriate skills, has also been repeatedly noted by experts of The Resource Center for the Development of Islamic Education of the KFU in the course of implementing the plan for training specialists with an in-depth knowledge of the history and culture of Islam in 2017-2020.73

73 Presentation of the activities of the "Dialogue" ICC during the II Russian-German Seminar for Youth Specialists "Prevention of Radicalism in youth" October 13-17, 2019 (Moscow-Kazan)/ Specialists of the
The organisations of the Republic of Tatarstan listed by us operate not only independently, but also in close cooperation with each other, which gives rise to the systematic nature of working with Muslims, especially those influenced by the ideology of extremist and terrorist organisations, both in and out of the prison system.

Carrying out complex work is unthinkable without strong civic support, i.e., the participation of caring citizens. In particular, in Tatarstan, the charitable foundation "Yardem" and the "Center for Rehabilitation and Adaptation" ANO have created a fund to help children. It is called "The Future Generation" and its volunteers are involved as public mediators. This work is extremely in demand, as the practice of providing social assistance is widespread in the Muslim environment, but patriotic activists, on the one hand, are afraid to contact and assist the families of convicts because of fear of being accused of aiding and abetting. On the other hand, when the families of such convicts are helped by radicals, they only reinforce the impression of their rightfulness and hostility of the state. "The Future Generation" Foundation plays the role of a neutral platform that allows to realise its best aspirations first, to block the second and to find ways to establish long-term, trusting relations with the families of wards.

"The Orange Project" for Muslim activists, with the participation of representatives of the Association of Psychological Aid, showed its effectiveness in socializing children, establishing and consolidating trust with the families of convicts by playing games, quests, holding mini-seminars.

In February 2018, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Resource Center for the Development of Islamic Education of Kazan Federal University and the "Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation" ANO, according to which the staff of the information and advisory centre OF IMOIV KFC "Dialogue" held a meeting with imams of the Laishev district of the Republic of Tatarstan URL: https://kpfu.ru/imoiv/islam/specialisty-infomacionno-konsultacionnogo-centra_334937.html; The official page of the "Dialogue" In the social network "Vkontakte" URL: https://vk.com/ikc.dialog
KFU Resource Center began to rehabilitate theological nature for former Muslim prisoners who were wards of the Center.

"The signing of the cooperation agreement between the KFU Resource Center for the Development of Islamic Education and the "Rehabilitation and Adaptation Center" ANO is the next stage of the Resource Center's resocialisation program for the Muslims who have returned from prison," explained Ramil Khairutdinov, director of the Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies of the KFU. "Today, the Resource Centre staff is doing everything to incorporate these people into the traditional Muslim community, which is undoubtedly very important for their return to normal life in general. It is both about carrying out a full social and professional adaptation, and about helping to solve ideological issues – KFU staff are engaged in solving the whole range of problems that arise in such cases. It is also important to emphasise the fact that these activities are carried out directly in the context of close cooperation with the security forces. Together, we are fighting for the return of the failed Muslims to normal life."

Among the wards of the Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation, which the Center's staff helps to go through the process of re-socialisation - providing them with housing and necessities for the first time after liberation, helping to solve the issues, associated with subsequent employment - naturally, there are Muslims who have converted to Islam already in prison - Islam, which sometimes has nothing to do with traditional movements. It is important to take into account that a person, being behind bars is in a state of endless stress, protest, rejection of everyone and everything, and, coming to Islam, can express this protest, including through religion. Of course, such people need to be rehabilitated in a theological nature, which is what the staff of “the Dialogue” Informational Center, which is part of the KFU Resource Center for the Development of Islamic Education,
began to do, conducting meetings with ANO wards, and the agreement on cooperation creates conditions for more systematic work in this direction.74

Thus, as Ilshat Mukhametzari, Deputy Director of Science at the Center for Islamic Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, points out, umma institutions (religious leaders, mosques, educational institutions, charitable and public organisations) play an important role in the spiritual feeding of converts who profess Islam in preventing radicalism and can successfully counter extremism in the following areas:

1) training of clergy, teachers and preachers;
2) theological reasoning;
3) usage of new methods of working with young people (especially using the Internet);
4) charity work;
5) participation in inter-religious and intercultural dialogues;
6) participation in the prevention of extremism and deradicalisation (including in execution facilities, prisons);
7) distribution of alternative positive narratives (messages).

However, religious institutions cannot cope with such a serious problem on their own, as they act only as a part of the society that complements and ennobles but does not replace other social and public institutions. Only in cooperation with educational institutions, state bodies, etc. public relations participants can build an effective system of preventing extremism and deradicalisation.

Religious institutions, represented by imams and teachers of religious schools, can build contacts with parents, relatives, friends of people at risk, ordinary believers. They can help reduce radicalising factors among believers in areas such as 1) education; 2) training

74 Staff at the KFC Resource Center for the Development of Islamic and Islamic Education will conduct theological rehabilitation for former Muslim prisoners https://kpfu.ru/imoiv/islam/sotrudniki-resursnogo-centra-kfu-po-razvitiju_332051.html; The official website: ELN "Center for Social Rehabilitation and Adaptation" URL: https://centtra.ru/
and employment; 3) social well-being, housing; 4) medical and psychological care; 5) combating extremist propaganda, information; 6) changing the communicative environment.

The priests in all deradicalisation programs are first-line workers, along with teachers; employment specialists, social protection specialists, youth and children's specialists, police officers, psychologists. Among the requirements for first-line workers are: 1) ability to establish direct contact with a person; 2) knowledge of the causes, signs, process of radicalisation; 3) special knowledge (psychology, pedagogy, religious issues, etc.); 4) ability to enter into trust; 5) maintaining a positive relationship; 6) constant monitoring of the ward; 7) readiness to interact with other specialists and work in a team. All individual deradicalisation strategies include developing a special style of communication; support for family, community, group; caring for the mental health of the ward; changing the leisure of the individual, and in this respect, religious figures are often irreplaceable. Also, representatives of the Muslim Umma can take into account the characteristics of persons exposed to radical propaganda, in particular: 1) ethnicity; 2) creed; 3) region of origin and residence; 4) traditional social roles; 5) kinship; 6) relationships with elders; 7) relationship between the sexes, as well as 8,) individual features of personality socialisation (education).75

**Experience of other regions**

In the direction of systematic work on the spiritual feeding of Muslims imprisoned and deradicalised persons involved in the activities of extremist and terrorist organisations of Islamist nature, the Republic of Tatarstan has gone far enough. This is explained, of course,

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by the peculiarity of the ethno-confessional structure of the region, where more than half of the population is ethnic Muslims. But other regions of the Russian Federation have their own, no less interesting experience.

For example, in the Sverdlovsk region, for certain reasons, since 2016, the convicts who profess Islam have not been able to meet with Islamic clerics. To help solve this issue, the public organisation, the Ural Association "Center for Ethno-Confessional Research, Prevention of Extremism and Countering the Ideology of Terrorism" offered its help.

In May 2017, Sverdlovsk region correctional facilities (IK-2, IR-10 in Yekaterinburg, IR-13 in Nizhny Tagil, IR-46 in Nevyansk) at the invitation of the "Center for Ethno-Confessional Studies..." and GUFSIN of Russia in the Sverdlovsk region was visited by a member of the ONC of the Kemerovo region, the first deputy chairman of the Central Committee "Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of the Kemerovo region, imam-hatib of the Cathedral Mosque "Munira" Rubin Munirov to conduct conversations with the convicts, who practice Islam, on spiritual and moral themes, prevention of extremist and terrorist sentiments. During the conversations with the convicts, the imam paid special attention to the inadmissibility of violence, theologically argued the need to comply with the rules of internal order in prisons, responded to the questions of worried convicts who profess Islam. More than 150 convicts took part in meetings with the imam.

To organise the work with convicts professing Islam, the Regional DUM of the Sverdlovsk Region of the jurisdiction of the Central Committee of Russia signed cooperation agreements with the "Center for Ethno-Confessional Studies..." and Russia's Sverdlovsk Region Gufsin. As part of the implementation of these Agreements, a methodical seminar with the participation of the regional governor's administration and GUFSIN was held on 26 February 2018 for the imams in the Sverdlovsk region to train them to work with the converts who profess Islam. Since then, the imams of the Sverdlovsk Region Regional DUM, enshrined in specific colonies, have begun to attend them and perform spiritual services,
hold religious rites for Muslims and participate in interfaith activities together with the Orthodox clergy.

The next day, a methodical seminar was held with the participation of Imam Akhunda of the Sverdlovsk region, Radifulla Gindullin, and the imam-hatib of the Munira Mosque, Rubin Munirov, with the deputy chiefs of the Sverdlovsk region colonies. More than 50 FPSR employees took part in the meeting.

Rubin Munirov also visited the colony of Ivandel, 500 km from Yekaterinburg, as part of the seminars. More than 100 convicts from 4 colonies took part in meetings with the imam.

Similar seminars for FPSR staff and religious instruction for convicts were conducted by the experts from the "Center for Ethno-Confessional Studies..." in the Kurgan Region in July 2019.

The ‘Center for Ethno-Confessional Research’ is looking for new forms of working with convicts. Thus, on April 27-28, 2018, after the invitation from the "Center for Ethno-Confessional Studies..." the Sverdlovsk region was visited by Nadezhda Ilyinichna Gurieva, head of the Museum of Heroes of the Russian Special Forces, and her daughter Irina, who were held hostage at the school in 2004, attended meetings on anti-terrorist issues with the public and students of higher education Ekaterinburg, journalists, as well as convicts in prison and members of FPSR institutions. The meeting with more than 200 convicts took place in the Correctional Colony No.10 in Yekaterinburg (strict regime). The story of this heroic woman, who lost two children during the terrorist attack, hurt the convicts to the core and had a serious educational effect. On September 3, 2018, on the Day of Solidarity in The Fight against Terrorism, the President of the "Center for Ethno-Confessional Studies..." Pavlenko S.A. visited the Correctional Colony No.2 in Yekaterinburg to meet with the convicts. The meeting was attended by 600 people. He spoke about the grief that terrorism brings with the example of Beslan and other terrorist attacks committed in the recent years in the Russian Federation. This performance was filmed and shown in other colonies of the
Sverdlovsk region. In December 2019, with the participation of a psychologist from Rostov-on-Don Natalia Sedykh "Center for Ethno-Confessional Research..." held anti-terrorist activities in two women's colonies, which happened for the very first time in Russia.\textsuperscript{76}

The experts of the "Center for Ethno-Confessional Studies..." regularly conduct seminars for members of the Federal Correctional Service to inform them of the activities of various extremist and terrorist ideologies, forms and methods of dissemination of their views, particularly in places of imprisonment. So, in February- March and December of 2019 with the participation of experts of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan and experts of the "Center for Ethno-Confessional Studies..." several meetings were held with correctional leaders and staff to give lectures on countering the ideology of radical subcultures and countering the spread of religious extremism in the jurisdictional institutions.

The Chelyabinsk region, the Republic of Bashkortostan, the Omsk region, the Kemerovo region and several other regions where the Muslim Spiritual Administrations are quite strong have their own experience with convicts.\textsuperscript{77}

As a result of all of the above, we can conclude that gradually scientific, methodical and practical work on spiritual nourishment, deradicalisation and resocialisation of convicts professing Islam, begins to gain momentum. In the last few years, research on Islamic spiritual service in prisons has been conducted at several federal sites, primarily in Moscow, Kazan, Yekaterinburg and other cities, and scientific and methodical works are being


\textsuperscript{77} It is noteworthy that various incidents involving the so-called "green zones" and "prison jamaats" that we have described in the past have occurred in regions where Muslim communities are either few or poorly interacting with the authorities and the FPSR system: in particular, in the Republics of Kalmykia, Buryatia, Tyva.
published, training courses are held for imams and GUFSIN staff, and prison service projects receive grant support. And this is not accidental, because by identifying the representatives of extremist and terrorist organisations of Islamist nature, suppressing their activities "in the wild", the state should not allow them to spread their destructive views in the places deprived of freedom. And in the recent years, to understand how to do this, the FPSR, the imams and the scientific community have been working together, which was analysed in this report. Time will tell how effective it is, but the fact that it should be deepened and expanded is obvious now.

Alexey Starostin
Chair of political sciences in the Ural federal University

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79 Such refresher courses are held regularly at Kazan Federal University. For example: In Kazan, there were training courses in Islamic studies for employees of the Russian criminal-executive system URL: http://www.fsin.su/news/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=123942