
Russian Federation

Constitution(Adopted 12 December 1993), Article 13

5) The establishment and activities of public associations whose goals and activities are aimed at the forcible changing of the basis of the constitutional order and at violating the integrity of the Russian Federation, at undermining its security, at creating armed units, and at instigating social, racial, national and religious strife shall be prohibited.

Constitution, Article 19

2) The State guarantees the equality of human and civil rights and freedoms regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, material an official status, place of residence, attitude to religion, convictions, membership of public associations, or of other circumstances. All forms of limitations of human rights on social, racial, national, language or religious grounds shall be prohibited.

Constitution, Article 29

2) Propaganda or agitation, which arouses social, racial, national or religious hatred and hostility shall be prohibited. Propaganda of social, racial, national, religious or linguistic supremacy shall also be prohibited.

Federal Law on the freedom of conscience and religious associations (26 September 1997, as amended in 2002), Article 3(6)

6) The prevention of exercise of rights to the freedom of conscience and faith, including that associated with violence against person, the intentional hurting of feelings of citizens in connection with their attitude to religion, the propaganda of religious supremacy, the destruction of or damage to the property or a threat of committing such actions shall be prohibited and prosecuted in accordance with the Federal Law. Conducting public events, putting up texts and images that may hurt the religious feelings of citizens close to projects of religious worship shall be prohibited.

Federal Law on the basic guarantees of electoral rights and right to participate in referendum of the citizens of the Russian Federation (12 June 2002, as amended in 2006) Article 56 - Limitations during conducting the election campaign and agitation on the questions of referendum

Agitation, which arouses social, racial, national or religious hostility, humiliating national dignity, propagating exclusiveness, superiority or deficiency of citizens on grounds of their attitude towards religion, or on social, racial, national, religious or language grounds, and also agitation, during the conduction of which there are propagated and publicly demonstrated Nazi attributes or symbols, or attributes and symbols which are similar to Nazi attributes and symbols to the extent where they may be confused, shall be prohibited ...

Criminal code, (16 June 1996, as amended in 2006) Article 239 - Organisation of groups which encroach on the person and the rights of citizens

Penalises the setting up of a religious or voluntary association whose activities involve violence against citizens or inducement to commit other unlawful acts, specifically those linked to the incitement of racial discord and enmity, and the leading of such a group, taking part in its activities or propagating of aforementioned actions.

Criminal Code, Article 280. Public Appeals to the Performance of an Extremist Activity

1. Public appeals to the performance of extremist activity - shall be punishable by a fine in the amount up to 300 thousand roubles, or in the amount of the wage or salary, or any other income of the convicted person for a period up to two years, or by arrest for a term of four to six months, or by deprivation of liberty for a term of up to three years.
2. The same acts, committed with the use of the mass media, shall be punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term up to five years entailing the deprivation of the right to hold certain jobs or engage in certain occupations for a term up to three years.

Criminal Code, Article 282. Incitement of Hatred or Enmity, as Well as Abasement of Human Dignity

1. Actions aimed at the incitement of hatred or enmity, as well as abasement of dignity of a person or a group of persons on the basis of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, attitude to religion, as well as affiliation to any social group, if these acts have been committed in public or with the use of mass media,

shall be punishable by a fine in the amount of 100 to 300 minimum wages, or in the amount of the wage or salary, or any other income of the convicted person for a period of one to two years, or by deprivation of the right to hold specified offices or to engage in specified activities for a term of up to three years, or by compulsory works for a term of up to 180 hours, or by corrective works for a term of up to one year, or by deprivation of liberty for a term of up to two years.

2. The same deeds committed:

- a) with the use of violence or with the threat of its use; b) by a person through his official position; c) by an organized group, -

shall be punishable by a fine in the amount of 100 thousand to 500 thousand roubles or in the amount of the wage or salary, or any other income of the convicted person for a period of one to three years, or by deprivation of the right to hold specified offices or to engage in specified activities for a term of up to five years, or by compulsory works for a term of 120 to 240 hours, or by corrective works for a term of one to two years, or by deprivation of liberty for a term of up to five years.

Article 282.1. Organizing an Extremist Community

1. Creation of an extremist community, that is, of an organized group of persons for the preparation or for the performance, with the motives of the ideological, political, racial, national or religious hatred or enmity, as well as on the motives of hatred or enmity towards any one social group, of the crimes mentioned in Articles 148, 149, in the first and in the second parts of Article 213, in Articles 214, 243, 244, 280 and 282 of this Code (crimes with an extremist thrust), as well as the leadership of such an extremist community, of a part of it or of the structural subdivisions included into such community, and also setting up an association of the organizers, leaders or other representatives of the parts or of the structural subdivisions of such community for the purposes of elaboration of the plans and or the conditions for committing crimes with an extremist thrust -

- shall be punished with a fine in the amount of up to 200 thousand roubles, or in the amount of the wages or of other income of the convicted person for a period up to 18 months, or by the deprivation of the right to occupy definite posts or to engage in a definite activity for a term of up to five years, or by imprisonment for a term up to four years.

2. Participation in an extremist community -

- shall be punished with a fine in the amount up to 40 thousand roubles, or in the amount of the wages or of the other income of the convicted person for a period up to three months, or by imprisonment for a term of up to two years with the deprivation of the right to occupy specific posts or to engage in a specific kind of activity for a term of up to three years, or without any term.

Federal Law No. 73-FZ of July 21, 2004 amended the third part of Article 282.1 of the present Code

3. The actions envisaged in the first and second parts of the present Article committed by the person with the use of his official status, -

- shall be punished with a fine in the amount of 100 thousand to 300 thousand roubles, or in the amount of the wages or of other income of the convicted person for a period of one to two years, or by imprisonment for a term of up to six years with the deprivation of the right to occupy specific posts or to engage in a specific kind of activity for a term of up to three years.

Note. A person who voluntarily stops his participation in an extremist community shall be relieved of criminal liability unless a different corpus delicti is contained in his actions.

Code on Administrative Violations (30 December 2001, as amended in 2006) Article 5.26 -Breach of the law on the freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and religious associations

Provides administrative responsibility (fine) for obstruction of the exercise of the right of freedom of conscience and religious freedom, including adoption of religious or other beliefs or rejection of them, entry to a religious association or secession from one; for hurting the religious feelings of citizens or desecration of their venerated objects, signs and emblems of the world-view nature.

Mass Media Code 1992, art. 4.2 Prohibits the dissemination of any information aimed at initiation of national or racial intolerance and also prohibits registration of mass media undertakings if their bylaws contain any provisions favouring racial intolerance or discrimination.

Public Associations Law 1995, art. 23 Prohibits registration of public associations the goals, activities or statutes of which involve racial or national intolerance.

Law on Political Parties. Adopted on 21.6.01. FZ- 95 Art. 9. restriction on creation and activity of political parties : Creation and activity of political parties are forbidden, if the purposes or actions of the party are directed on incitement of social, racial, national or religious hostility. Creation of political parties is not supposed on the basis of a professional, racial, national or religious belonging.

Law 25 July 2002, about counteraction of extremist activity : Definition of the extremist's activity: incitement of racial, national or religious enmity, and also social enmity, connected to violence or appeals over violence; humiliation of national dignity; realization of mass disorders, hooligan actions and acts of vandalism on motives of ideological, political, racial, national or religious hatred or enmity, and also on motives of hatred or enmity concerning any social group; propagation of exclusiveness, the superiority or inferiority of citizens on the basis of their attitude to religion, a social, racial, national, religious or language belonging.

Federal Act No. 211-FZ of 24 July 2007 on amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation in connection with the improvement of State administration in the area of countering extremism contains new criteria for extremist activities, which were approved by the Federal Act on measures to counter extremism. In particular, extremist activities include the forcible change of the foundations of the constitutional system and violation of the integrity of the Russian Federation; incitement of social, racial, ethnic or religious strife; advocating exclusiveness or the superiority or inferiority of persons on the grounds of their social, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic affiliation or their attitude to religion; violation of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of individuals and citizens on the grounds of their social, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic affiliation or their attitude to religion; public calls for the commission of the aforementioned acts or the mass dissemination of materials known to be of an extremist nature, and also their production or storage for the purpose of mass dissemination; the organization and preparation of the aforementioned acts, and incitement to their commission; financing of such activities or otherwise facilitating their organization, preparation or commission, including the provision of teaching, printing or other technical facilities, telephone or other means of communication or information services. In accordance with the aforementioned Act, an extremist organization is a voluntary or religious association or other organization which, on the grounds specified in the Federal Act, a court has adopted an enforceable decision to suppress or prohibit in connection with involvement in extremist activities.

Case Law

Russia

Constitutional Court: <http://ks.rfnet.ru/>

**КОНСТИТУЦИОННЫЙ СУД
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ**

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Supreme Court: <http://www.vsrfr.ru/>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Supreme Court of Russia. At the top, there is a header with the court's name in Russian: "Верховный Суд Российской Федерации". Below this, there are several navigation menus including "Главная страница сайта", "Документы Верховного Суда Российской Федерации", "Обращение граждан", "Новости и события", "Запрос о деятельности Верховного Суда Российской Федерации", and "Карьерная работа".

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- О Верховном Суде**: A sidebar menu with links to "Общая информация", "Организационная структура", "Документы, регламентирующие деятельность", "Информация о печатном органе", "Информационные системы", and "Информация о размещении заказов".
- Новости**: A list of recent news items with dates (December 2010) and brief descriptions of court decisions and activities.
- Электронная справочная**: A section for online services, including "Тексты судебных актов", "Справочная информация по делам", "Справочная информация по жалобам", "Списки дел, назначенных к слушанию", and "Результаты обжалования нормативно-правовых актов".
- Уважаемые посетители сайта!**: A notice regarding the court's website accessibility and information services.
- Чаше всего ищут:** A list of frequently searched terms such as "Положение Верховного Суда", "Постановления Пленума Верховного Суда РФ", and "Как обратиться в Верховный Суд РФ".
- Почтовый адрес** and **Адреса сайта**: Contact information for the court's postal address and website.

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text "© 2010 Верховный Суд Российской Федерации".

This screenshot shows a detailed view of a news article from the Supreme Court of Russia website. The article is dated December 23, 2010, and is titled "Постановления Пленума Верховного Суда Российской Федерации от 21 декабря 2010 года № 29". The text discusses the court's decision on the creation of a judicial college.

Below the article, there are several sections:

- Чаше всего ищут:** A list of frequently searched terms, similar to the one in the first screenshot.
- Почтовый адрес** and **Адреса сайта**: Contact information for the court's postal address and website.
- Время работы**: A table showing the court's operating hours:

понедельник - четверг	9:00-12:00
пятница	9:00-16:45
- Номера телефонов справочные:** A list of phone numbers for various services:

по приему граждан	(495) 590-54-43
по гражданским делам	(495) 590-43-14
по уголовным делам	(495) 590-49-09
Пресс-служба	(495) 627-97-91
- Важные ссылки**: A list of important links to various court documents and information.
- Фотогалерея**: A gallery of photos related to the court's activities.
- Видеоматериалы**: A list of video materials, including a recording of a meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Court.

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text "© 2010 Верховный Суд Российской Федерации".

Public Policies

(Translated from Russian)

**Information from the Russian Federation for the report of
the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its
sixty-third session pursuant to Assembly resolution 62/154,
entitled “Combating defamation of religions”**

Reference: 313 jdb/ln

The Russian Federation is one of the world’s most multi-ethnic States. According to the 2002 national census, the Russian Federation’s population of 145,166,000 consists of 160 peoples professing Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions.

The 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation prohibits all forms of discrimination. This constitutional provision is fully consistent with the Russian Federation’s international obligations. Article 19 of the Constitution states:

“1. All persons are equal before the law and the courts.

“2. The State guarantees the equality of human and civil rights and freedoms regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin, property status, occupation, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, membership of voluntary associations or other circumstances. Any restriction of human rights on social, racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious grounds is prohibited.”

In accordance with article 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, everyone is guaranteed freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, including the right to profess, individually or together with others, any religion or none at all, and freely to choose, hold and disseminate religious and other beliefs and to act in conformity with them. Freedom of religion, including the right to profess any religion, freely to hold and disseminate religious beliefs and to act in conformity with them, is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation and is protected by criminal law.

HRC/NONE/2008/206
GE.08-15090 (E) 280808 010908

At the same time, article 55, paragraph 3, of the Constitution of the Russian Federation provides that human and civil rights and freedoms may be restricted by federal law to the extent that this is necessary to protect the foundations of the constitutional system, morality, health, the rights and legitimate interests of other persons, or national defence and security.

Article 13, paragraph 5, of the Constitution prohibits the establishment and the activities of voluntary associations whose aims or actions are calculated to foment social, racial, ethnic or religious strife.

Another important constitutional provision designed to prohibit discrimination of any kind is article 29, paragraph 2, which states:

“Propaganda or campaigns fomenting social, racial, ethnic or religious hatred or enmity are prohibited. The advocacy of social, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic superiority is likewise forbidden.”

In the Russian Federation, the search for, receipt, production and dissemination of information, and also the establishment, possession, use and disposal of mass media, are not subject to restrictions, unless otherwise provided by law. Article 29, paragraph 5, of the Constitution prohibits censorship, thereby giving the media freedom of action. At the same time, the Russian Constitution prohibits the abuse of freedom of speech, particularly with a view to protecting citizens.

It is prohibited to abuse freedom of the media to divulge information constituting a State or other secret specially protected by law, to call for the seizure of power and the forcible change of the constitutional system and the integrity of the State, to incite ethnic, class, social or religious intolerance or strife, to promote war, pornography or the cult of violence and cruelty, and to carry out terrorist activities and spread extremist materials.

It is also prohibited to abuse the right of journalists by disseminating information that discredits a citizen or individual categories of citizens on the grounds of sex, age, racial or ethnic affiliation, language, attitude to religion, profession, place of residence or work, and political beliefs, is also prohibited.

The aforementioned articles of the Constitution were further reflected and developed in other laws and regulations of the Russian Federation.

The most effective legal response to violations of citizens' racial, ethnic or religious equality is criminal prosecution of the perpetrators. The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation contains a number of legal norms intended to prevent and suppress manifestations of racial, ethnic and religious discrimination and to protect the rights and freedoms of all citizens against criminal encroachments.

Under article 136 of the Criminal Code, socially dangerous acts, such as violating citizens' equality, are subject to prosecution. Article 63 of the Criminal Code provides that the commission of an offence motivated by ethnic, racial or religious hatred or enmity is an aggravating circumstance. The commission of particularly serious offences against a person on those grounds entails significantly harsher punishment. Accordingly, severer punishment is prescribed for the commission of offences motivated by ethnic, racial or religious hatred or enmity. Thus, an offence contrary to article 117, paragraph 2 (h) (Causing physical or mental suffering by systematic acts of violence - Cruelty motivated by ethnic, racial or religious hatred or enmity), of the Criminal Code is punishable by 3 to 7 years' deprivation of liberty; an offence contrary to article 111, paragraph 2 (f) (Causing serious injury to the victim's health for similar motives), of the Criminal Code is punishable by 3 to 10 years' deprivation of liberty; and an offence contrary to article 105, paragraph 2 (k) (Murder motivated by ethnic, racial or religious hatred or enmity), of the Criminal Code is punishable by 8 to 20 years' deprivation of liberty or life imprisonment.

In addition, special articles of the Criminal Code provide for responsibility for offences motivated by racial, ethnic or religious hatred: article 280 (Public calls for acts of extremism) and article 282 (Incitement of hatred or enmity and degradation of human dignity). The aforementioned elements of offences are subject to criminal prosecution when there is discrimination, that is, violation of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of individuals and citizens on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin, property status, occupation, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs and membership of voluntary organizations or social groups.

Consequently, when citizens exercise their constitutional rights, and specifically their right to religious freedom, they should do so in a way that does not violate other statutorily protected rights and freedoms of citizens, society or the State. It is therefore prohibited, on pain of the sanction prescribed by article 239 of the Criminal Code, to form a religious association whose activities involve violence against persons or encroachment of civil rights, or to participate in such associations.

According to official court statistics, from 2003 to 2006, 17 individuals were convicted of forming or controlling a religious or voluntary association which was engaged in violent activities or which encouraged citizens not to perform their civic duties or to commit other unlawful acts. Almost half - eight - of the aforementioned individuals were convicted in 2005. Sixteen individuals were found guilty of organizing the aforementioned associations, and only one was convicted for participating in the activities of such associations that involved violence against citizens or encouraged citizens not to perform their civic duties or to commit unlawful acts.

The Labour Code of the Russian Federation of 30 December 2001 contains a number of articles designed to eradicate all forms of discrimination in the workplace. Thus, articles 2 and 3 of the Labour Code (No. 197-FZ of 30 December 2006) prohibit discrimination at work and guarantee equal opportunities for the exercise of labour rights; these articles prohibit the restriction of anyone's labour rights and freedoms on the grounds of race, skin colour, ethnicity, language, origin, place of residence, attitude to religion and political beliefs. The articles not only provide for equal opportunities for everyone to exercise his or her labour rights but also guarantee the possibility of compensation for moral harm to persons who have been subjected to discrimination on the aforementioned grounds.

In particular, the Labour Code establishes that, in the processing of personal information, employers and their representatives are not entitled to receive and process information concerning an employee's political, religious or other beliefs or his or her personal life. In cases directly related to labour relations, in accordance with article 24 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, an employer is entitled to receive and process information concerning an employee's personal life only with his or her written consent (art. 86). The rights covered by this article are protected in the Russian Federation by criminal law. The dissemination of information

that is known to be false and which insults the honour and degrades the dignity of another person or damages his or her reputation (slander) is, under Russian legislation, an offence contrary to article 129 of the Criminal Code.

Article 1, paragraph 4, of the Family Code of 29 December 1995 states that “all forms of restrictions on the rights of citizens entering into matrimony or in family relations on the grounds of social, racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious affiliation are prohibited”.

In order to expand on article 13, paragraph 5, of the Constitution, Federal Act No. 114-FZ on measures to counter extremism (amended on 27 July 2006 and 10 May 2007) was adopted on 25 July 2002. The Act lays down the legal and organizational basis for combating acts of extremism and establishes responsibility for their commission. Specifically, article 1 of the Act defines extremist activity in the following manner:

- The activity of voluntary and religious associations or other organizations, media or individuals in planning, organizing, preparing and carrying out actions aimed, inter alia, at inciting racial, ethnic or religious strife, and also social discord, attended by violence or calls for violence, and the disparagement of an ethnic group
- Bringing about large-scale disorder, hooliganism and acts of vandalism motivated by ideological, political, racial, ethnic or religious hatred or enmity, or by hatred or enmity towards a particular social group
- Advocating exclusiveness or the superiority or inferiority of citizens on the grounds of their attitude to religion or on social, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic grounds

Federal Act No. 211-FZ of 24 July 2007 on amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation in connection with the improvement of State administration in the area of countering extremism contains new criteria for extremist activities, which were approved by the Federal Act on measures to counter extremism. In particular, extremist activities include the forcible change of the foundations of the constitutional system and violation of the integrity of the Russian Federation; incitement of social, racial, ethnic or religious strife; advocating exclusiveness or the superiority or inferiority of persons on the grounds of their social, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic affiliation or their attitude to religion; violation of the rights,

freedoms and legitimate interests of individuals and citizens on the grounds of their social, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic affiliation or their attitude to religion; public calls for the commission of the aforementioned acts or the mass dissemination of materials known to be of an extremist nature, and also their production or storage for the purpose of mass dissemination; the organization and preparation of the aforementioned acts, and incitement to their commission; financing of such activities or otherwise facilitating their organization, preparation or commission, including the provision of teaching, printing or other technical facilities, telephone or other means of communication or information services.

In accordance with the aforementioned Act, an extremist organization is a voluntary or religious association or other organization which, on the grounds specified in the Federal Act, a court has adopted an enforceable decision to suppress or prohibit in connection with involvement in extremist activities.

Measures to counter extremism are based on the principles of the recognition, observance and protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, and on the legitimate interests of organizations, legality, publicity and the priority of the security of the Russian Federation (Federal Act No. 211-FZ, art. 2).

Questions involving the restriction of specific human rights and freedoms when a state of emergency is declared have been brought into line with the Russian Federation's international obligations in the new Federal Constitutional Act on states of emergency of 30 May 2001 (7 March 2005 version). In accordance with the Act, measures taken during a state of emergency and involving a change (restriction) of established human rights and freedoms must be carried out to the extent required by the seriousness of the situation. However, such measures must be in conformity with the Russian Federation's international human rights obligations and must not entail any discrimination against individuals or population groups solely on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin, property status, occupation, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, membership of voluntary associations, or other circumstances.

Pursuant to article 5 of the Education Act (No. 3266-1 of 10 July 1992), citizens of the Russian Federation are guaranteed the opportunity to receive an education regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, social position, property status, or occupation.

Inter-ethnic and interfaith relations remain a priority for the Russian Federation's procuratorial bodies. Throughout the country, active cooperation has been established with the authorities in the areas of justice, the media and local government, and with other State structures involved in combating manifestations of extremism. The principal means of countering extremism are precautionary measures, detection, prevention and suppression of extremist activities on the part of voluntary and religious associations, other organizations and individuals.

On 17 May 2004, the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation issued Order No. 13 on improving the effectiveness of procuratorial monitoring of compliance with legislation on countering extremism, pursuant to which procuratorial bodies are charged with preventing, detecting, averting and suppressing extremist activities on the part of voluntary and religious associations, the media and individuals. These guidelines are amended and updated whenever appropriate.

The Office of the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation and procurator's offices of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation are carefully examining the legal situation in this area. In practice, since the adoption of the Federal Act on measures to counter extremism, law enforcement and other agencies have been increasingly active in countering extremist activities of voluntary and religious associations and individuals and ensuring that all citizens enjoy equal ethnic, racial and religious rights.

Together with other law enforcement agencies, procuratorial bodies are taking steps to suppress and prevent the alarming increase in manifestations of extremism among young people and teenagers.

Manifestations of extremism and xenophobia that encroach on freedom of conscience and religion, including the right to profess any religion or none at all, as guaranteed by article 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, are particularly dangerous. Similar safeguards are provided for in article 3 of the Federal Act of 26 September 1997 on freedom of conscience and

religious associations, which states that the human and civil right to freedom of conscience and religious freedom may be restricted only by federal law. It follows from these legal norms that the Russian Federation, as a secular State, guarantees to everyone the right to act in accordance with his or her religious beliefs within the limits defined by federal law.

Religious freedom as guaranteed by the Constitution is protected by the criminal law. For example, two individuals were convicted under article 148 of the Criminal Code in 2002 for unlawfully obstructing the activities of religious organizations. No further convictions for this offence have since been recorded.

At the same time, when citizens exercise their constitutional rights, and specifically their right to religious freedom, they must do so in a way that does not violate other statutorily protected rights and freedoms of individuals, society or the State. It is therefore prohibited, on pain of the sanction prescribed in article 239 of the Criminal Code, to form a religious association whose activities involve violence against persons or encroachments on civil rights, or to participate in such associations. According to official court statistics, three people were convicted in 2002-2003 for forming a religious association engaged in violent activities, or for controlling such an association. In 2004, seven people were convicted of organizing an association involved in violence and encroachment upon civil rights, and one person was convicted of membership of such an association.

The Ministry of Justice ensures that the by-laws and activities of voluntary associations conform to the Constitution of the Russian Federation and to current legislation. Accordingly, a number of organizations have been denied official registration following legal appraisal of their constituent documents. The increase in the number of religious organizations that have been denied official registration can be attributed to the more stringent requirements imposed by the justice agencies when legally appraising documents submitted for registration.

In order to guarantee the ethnocultural development of the peoples of the Russian Federation, resolve issues affecting inter-ethnic cooperation and partnership with religious organizations, the Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation, which is responsible for ethnic policy, was established by presidential decree in September 2004.

It is important to bear in mind the role played by civil society. In the Russian Federation, a large number of voluntary human rights organizations operate within the framework of existing laws and regulations. In May 2006, a ceremony was held in the Hall of Glory in the memorial complex on Poklonnaya hill in Moscow to mark the signing of an agreement to combat nationalism, xenophobia and religious strife (the Anti-fascist Pact). The leaders of 12 Russian political parties gathered on Poklonnaya hill to sign this instrument: United Russia, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, the Agrarian Party of Russia, the Union of Right-wing Forces, the United Socialist Party of Russia, the Pensioners' Party, the Patriots of Russia Party, the Social Justice Party, the United Russian Industrial Party, the Russian Peace Party, the Free Russia Party and the Democratic Party of Russia.

In June 2006, an international conference was organized on the theme "A multi-ethnic Russia in the twenty-first century: dialogue between cultures and religions, human rights". The conference was attended by representatives of voluntary associations, religious organizations, federal and religious authorities, academics and cultural personalities.

(Translated from Russian)

Information from the Russian Federation regarding the enquiry by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights dated 9 May 2005 on implementation of Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/3 entitled “Combating defamation of religions”

The Russian Federation is a multi-ethnic, multi-faith nation, which creates challenges that must be met on the basis of the law, in a spirit of mutual cohesion and a refusal - either by the majority or by a minority - to impose its will in an antagonistic manner.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees the equal rights and freedoms of citizens regardless of their attitude to religion (art. 19, para. 2). The Russian Federation is a secular State. No religion may be established as official or mandatory. Religious associations are distinct from the State and equal in the eyes of the law (Constitution, art. 14).

Article 29, paragraph 2, of the Russian Constitution prohibits propaganda or agitation that incites social, racial, ethnic or religious hatred and enmity. The same paragraph prohibits propaganda that advocates social, racial, national, religious or linguistic superiority.

In order to safeguard the above-mentioned rights and freedoms, the Criminal Code and Code of Administrative Offences specify appropriate criminal and administrative sanctions (Criminal Code, arts. 136, 148, 282; Code of Administrative Offences, art. 5.26).

Federal Act No. 125-FZ of 26 September 1997 on freedom of conscience and religious associations is the centrepiece of Russian legislation dealing with freedom of conscience, religious freedom and religious associations. The Act regulates legal relations pertaining to the human and civil right to freedom of conscience and religious freedom and establishes the legal status of religious organizations.

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More than 22,000 religious organizations were registered in the Russian Federation on 1 September 2005. Of these, more than 11,000 were affiliated to the Russian Orthodox Church, 60,000 were Islamic religious centres, 3,600 were local Muslim religious organizations, and roughly 4,000 were Protestant organizations.

Action to tackle racial discrimination and racism, including in the religious sphere, is also envisaged by the Federal Act of 25 July 2002 on combating extremism.

The procuratorial agencies of the Russian Federation systematically check that legislation to combat extremism is enforced and that political parties, voluntary and religious organizations obey the rule of law. The procuratorial agencies react appropriately in the light of their findings.

After the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation declared 15 Russian and international groups to be terrorist organizations, cells of the outlawed terrorist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Islamic Liberation), whose principal mission is to eliminate existing governments and impose Islamic rule via the re-establishment of a universal Islamic caliphate, were uncovered in several regions of the Russian Federation. Members of this organization were active in five cities in the Republic of Bashkortostan. Six criminal cases involving members of this organization were opened in the Republic of Tatarstan in 2004.

In November 2004 Moscow City Court convicted A.Y. Drozkovskaya and Y.S. Kasymukhanov, having found them guilty of forming a branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami in Moscow, manufacturing and disseminating literature advocating precepts of religious extremism, and calling for a change in the existing form of government and the establishment of a theocratic Islamic State.

Procuratorial agencies have begun to deal more aggressively with articles in the mass media that incite religious and inter-ethnic hatred.

After checking the facts, the Tatarstan procurator's office cautioned the chief editors of the newspapers *Zvezda Povolzhya* and *Vostochny ekspress* against using the mass media to disseminate extremist material. Professor V.V. Luzgin of the Kazan Power Industry University was cautioned for publishing a monograph containing extremist material.

Following the publication in the Voronezh-based newspaper *Bereg* of articles entitled “Passion of the Christ” and “Is it bad to be a Jew?”, which contained anti-Semitic statements, the provincial procurator’s office cautioned the chief editor that he had breached the law.

In certain cases, procuratorial reaction to articles inciting religious and inter-ethnic hatred was insufficient and criminal proceedings were brought under article 282 of the Criminal Code (Incitement to ethnic, racial or religious hatred).

Routine monitoring by the Ministry of Justice of the proper and timely registration of religious and voluntary organizations and the extent to which their activities conform to the goals and objectives outlined in their charters is an important tool for preventing extremist activity.

Thus, pursuant to an action brought by the Ministry of Justice, a court has banned the religious organization “Ancient Russian Inglist Church of Orthodox Old Believers (Inglists)” on the basis of extremism advocating the racial exclusivity and superiority of certain citizens and expressed through Nazi-like propaganda and public demonstrations.

More than 130 religious educational establishments are registered with the Federal Registration Service. By law, religious educational establishments must obtain an official licence to provide education services. It is not permitted to provide professional educational services in the absence of official registration and licensing.

The authorities in the states of the Russian Federation have started to carry out official theological audits in order to detect pseudoreligious associations, as a way of curbing the activities of pseudoreligious, Wahhabist and extremist groups.

In accordance with instructions from the Commission on Religious Associations reporting to the Government and from the Ministry of Justice, proposals have been drawn up to amend and supplement the Procedures for the conduct of official theological audits, as approved by Government Decision No. 565 of 3 June 1998.

The Ministry of Justice, in conjunction with executive and legislative bodies in the states of the Russian Federation, is conducting an outreach campaign to prepare for the establishment

of new religious educational institutions to train home-grown spiritual leaders of religious organizations and provide essential legal and technical assistance to bring the constitutional instruments of these organizations into line with current legislation.

M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University is working with the Ministry of Education and Science to enforce the provisions of Presidential instruction No. Pr-1089 of 19 June 2002, which formulates a package of measures to develop religious - specifically Muslim - education through the provision of organizational, financial and technical assistance.

Officials from the Ministry of Justice are on a working group to develop legislation on religious education set up by the Commission on Religious Associations reporting to the Russian Government.

To ensure that preventive measures against acts of hatred, discrimination and violence resulting from defamation of religions are enforced, and to strive for uniformity in law-enforcement practice, clarifications have been drawn up and circulated to local authorities regarding the application of certain legal provisions by bodies responsible for officially registering religious associations.

Officials of the Ministry of Justice have taken part in a number of international, national and interregional conferences, seminars and round-table events (for example in St. Petersburg, Omsk, Adler and Khabarovsk, attended by experts from local branches of the Federal Registration Service in the Siberian, Central, North-Western and Far Eastern federal areas) under the auspices of the Russian Academy of Public Administration reporting to the President and the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation. These events have focused on promoting tolerance and combating defamation of religions from a human rights perspective.

Procurators in the various states of the Russian Federation systematically check that monitoring bodies obey the law. The results of these checks show that, in 2004, the Ministry of Justice made more assertive use of its powers to ban and curb extremist activities by voluntary and religious associations. A higher number of religious organizations were disqualified from registering because the Ministry of Justice introduced more stringent requirements for the legal assessment of documents submitted for registration.

At the same time, despite improvements in the work of agencies of the Ministry of Justice, procuratorial checks in some regions revealed a number of shortcomings in the agencies' working methods. The procuratorial agencies have reacted appropriately to all the violations they have uncovered.

Thus, the Orenburg provincial procurator submitted a recommendation to the director of the provincial office of the Ministry of Justice regarding non-compliance with legislation on checking registration of religious associations. Procurator's offices in the Republic of Chuvashia, the Republic of Ingushetia, Krasnodar territory, Kostroma province and Tyumen province have taken similar action.

In some cases procurators themselves have had to take appropriate action, instead of agencies of the Ministry of Justice. For example, procurators in Kostroma province verified the credentials of 45 voluntary organizations including nine local branches of political parties and four local religious associations. After checking the facts, they issued 14 cautions and 7 recommendations regarding breaches of current legislation and on 59 occasions petitioned the courts to rule that certain voluntary associations had ceased to perform the activities defined in their respective charters. Thirty-five of these petitions were upheld and the rest are being considered.

On 2 August 2004 the procurator of Primorsky territory petitioned the territorial court to wind up the charitable voluntary organization Amurt. Its members adhered to the principles of the international religious organization Ananda Marga, which is recognized throughout the world as a destructive force. The procurator's petition was upheld.

The procurator of Ordzhonikidze district in Ekaterinburg cautioned the religious organization Rakhman against inciting ethnic strife among young people and students.

It should be noted that, in their work in this area, procuratorial agencies have displayed greater openness and intensified their cooperation with law enforcement agencies, offices of central government in the regions and local authorities. Procuratorial officials comment regularly in the media on efforts to combat extremism and terrorism. Generally speaking, procuratorial supervision in this area is satisfactory, and the activities of local procurators are commensurate with the crime situation in the regions.

In preliminary investigations and trials of criminal cases under article 282 of the Criminal Code, it is normal practice to seek expert help in elucidating sensitive material. Expert opinions have hitherto been sought from specialists who are not officially accredited experts. Rarely, however, is proper attention paid to genuine professional competence in this field, which is essential if pronouncements in the media and public forums are to be analysed semantically and their purport determined (chiefly using tools from psycholinguistics, linguistics and social psychology). Consequently, many experts have provided assessments of dubious quality; their conclusions have been superficial, one-sided and not based on a full and scientifically grounded analysis of the semantic purport of the material submitted for examination. Experts have frequently displayed ignorance of the procedural requirements for conducting expert assessments and formulating conclusions.

Accordingly, the Procurator-General has repeatedly proposed to establish a specialized unit within expert departments of the Ministry of Justice to carry out ethnological, religious, psycholinguistic and other forms of expert analysis. This would enable investigations of criminal cases involving extremist offences to be conducted more successfully.

At the same time, it is apparent that the challenges of defeating extremism and harmonizing inter-ethnic and interfaith relations in society cannot be tackled exclusively by legal means. Other even more important measures are perhaps required. They include:

- Early elaboration of guidelines on national religious policy, with input from research centres of the Russian Academy of Sciences. For information, the Pontifical Assembly of the Russian Orthodox Church adopted the Principles of Social Policy of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2000; the Council of Muftis of Russia presented the Basic Provisions of the Social Programme of Russian Muslims in May 2001; the Principles of the Social Framework of Judaism in Russia were published in 2002; and the Social Position of the Protestant Churches of Russia was published in 2003.
- Resumption of work on the special federal programme entitled “Shaping an attitude of tolerance and preventing extremism in Russian society, 2001-2005”.

Pursuant to Government Decision No. 629 of 25 August 2001, implementation of this programme focused on introducing into social practice guidelines on tolerance that prescribe how individuals and social groups should behave at times of social tension, as a basis for civil harmony in a democratic society.

Despite much valuable work done by a number of State and academic institutions in recent years, the capacity of academic institutions and educational establishments in the law enforcement sphere has not been utilized. This explains why, in the view of specialists at the Research Institute for Strengthening the Rule of Law and Law and Order attached to the Office of the Procurator-General, the provisions of the programme were implemented in isolation from the legal sphere and did not concentrate on bringing actual legal relations into line with the standards of a democratic state governed by the rule of law.

Criminological and socio-legal research conducted in 1998-2002 has shown that the right to protection against harmful information that compromises moral, mental, physical and social development, as recognized by international and national statutes, is in a parlous state in the Russian Federation.

According to Government Decision No. 665 dated 19 November 2004, the special federal programme entitled “Shaping an attitude of tolerance and preventing extremism in Russian society, 2001-2005” has now been implemented, but it would be well to extend it beyond 2005. This time, however, the programme should focus on developing a statutory framework to protect citizens’ information security and their spiritual and moral safety.

As well as developing current legislation, there is a real deficiency in the programme that needs to be addressed by concentrating on the development and introduction of teaching programmes in secondary and higher education that are designed to shape legal awareness and legal culture. Neglect of this aspect leads to the development of misguided and unlawful practices that seek to introduce ideological bias into education, thereby creating a serious obstacle to shaping an attitude of tolerance and preventing extremism in Russian society.

A cross-disciplinary approach to these issues will yield effective arrangements to prevent extremism, specifically manifestations of xenophobia and ethnic and religious intolerance in society, and a framework within which public bodies at all levels can fight extremism.

In recent years the penal correction system has been reformed to make conditions of service of punishment more humane. Among other things, convicted and remand prisoners are given the opportunity to exercise their right to freedom of conscience and religion.

In the Russian Federation, the spiritual and moral education of convicts, the provision of humanitarian assistance and the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners are the province of traditional religions officially registered with the relevant public bodies. Penal institutions and authorities and religious organizations or associations cooperate on an ongoing contractual basis. Clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church and other Christian denominations, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews and officers of a variety of national and foreign charities and foundations are active in this work.

There are currently 383 functioning places of worship in institutions administered by the Federal Penal Correction Service, including 360 Orthodox churches, 15 mosques, 5 Buddhist prayer houses and three Roman Catholic churches. Another 77 places of worship are under construction, including 71 Orthodox churches, 4 mosques, 1 Buddhist prayer house and 1 Evangelical Baptist prayer house. There are 698 prayer rooms (506 Orthodox, 56 Muslim, 73 Evangelical Baptist, 51 Pentecostalist, 7 Buddhist, 2 Roman Catholic and 3 for adherents of other Protestant denominations). Convicts have founded more than 1,200 religious societies of various faiths, which now have over 56,000 adherents. Some 375 Sunday schools (Bible courses) have been inaugurated in 65 regions of the country, where more than 12,500 convicts voluntarily receive religious instruction, study religious precepts and learn about religious services.

With the blessing of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexei II, voluntary religious organizations play an active role in the advancement of Orthodox religious education in penitentiaries. They include the Inter-regional Charitable Foundation for Assisting Prisoners, the national voluntary movement "Orthodox Russia", and the prison relief society "Faith, Hope and Love".

Under the terms of a joint cooperation agreement, the Federation of Jewish Societies of Russia is implementing a religious support programme for prisoners of the Jewish faith. The

Federation insures their life and health, pays their subscription to the magazine *Lekhaim* and the newspaper *Evreiskoe slovo*. On every Jewish holiday prisoners receive personally addressed packages containing matso (unleavened bread), religious literature and greetings.

Local offices of the Federal Penal Correction Service and the Theological Board of Muslims dealing with the spiritual and moral education of Muslim convicts have established ongoing contractual relations.

Cooperation between correctional institutions and Protestant organizations is continuing. Representatives of the Russian Union of Evangelical Baptists pay regular visits to correctional institutions in 40 states of the Russian Federation. There are 151 Evangelical Baptist societies with a membership of roughly 3,000 convicts. These societies have established 33 rehabilitation centres for ex-prisoners who have lost socially useful ties.

Representatives of the Russian United Alliance of Evangelical Faith Christians (Pentecostalists) visit adherents of this denomination in 28 regions of the country. There are more than 2,000 Pentecostalist prisoners forming 92 congregations.

Representatives of other religious organizations visit correctional institutions in 17 regions of the Russian Federation.

Recently, prison officers have had to deal with attempted infiltrations of certain correctional institutions in the North Caucasus region by adherents of Wahhabism, the radical extremist current of Islam. The national executive of the Federal Penal Correction Service and local prison authorities are taking steps to prevent the spread of Wahhabism among convicts.

Procuratorial efforts to tackle religious intolerance in society

Freedom of conscience and religion includes the freedom to change one's religion or beliefs, and freedom, either alone or in community, with others and in private, to manifest one's religion or belief in practice, teaching, worship and observance (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 18; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 18; European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, art. 9; Constitution of the Russian Federation, art. 28).

The underlying principles of this rule are reflected in the Russian Constitution and Russian legislation on freedom of conscience and religious associations. The Russian Federation is a secular, democratic State governed by the rule of law. Everyone is guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion. This means the right, individually or in association with others, to practise any religion or no religion at all, and the freedom to choose, hold and disseminate religious and other beliefs and to act in accordance with them. The Russian Constitution enshrines principles that are vital for asserting religious freedom, namely the equality of human and civil rights and freedoms irrespective of attitude to religion; the inalienability of rights and freedoms and the attachment of these rights and freedoms from birth; the sanctity of private life; the prohibition of propaganda, agitation or incitement to religious hatred or advocacy of religious superiority; the right to obtain and disseminate information by any lawful means; and the right to perform alternative military service because of one's religious beliefs (Constitution, arts. 17, 19, 23, 28, 29 and 59).

There are currently 22,000 religious organizations in the Russian Federation affiliated to 60 different denominations. Supported by millions of Russian citizens, they include local societies and national religious organizations, religious centres and monasteries, religious educational institutions, missions and brotherhoods. Religious organizations are woven into the social fabric and pursue social, charitable, cultural, publishing, educational and economic activities. Legal and organizational arrangements have been put in place in the Russian Federation to enable citizens to exercise their right to freedom of conscience.

At the same time, the embodiment in statute of the principles of freedom of conscience and secularity is in itself no guarantee that these principles will be externalized and observed in practice.

Ensuring that these rights can be exercised in a meaningful way is still, by and large, an acute problem.

The challenge facing procuratorial agencies is to employ procuratorial oversight to tackle the contributory causes of real-life violations of human rights and freedoms. Accordingly,

monitoring of human rights observance in this area of legal relations is a core component of the work of procuratorial agencies. Procuratorial agencies take effective steps to deal with all breaches of the law that are brought to light.

It should be noted that the most revered and influential religions in Russia today, based on numbers of followers and registered religious organizations, are Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism.

For the first time in Russian history, the new legislation on freedom of conscience and religion adopted in 1990 created opportunities for Islam, together with other religions, to restore its religious traditions and internal organization. In 1988 there were 402 working mosques in the territory of the USSR; by 1991 there were already 1,602.

On 1 January 2004, according to the register maintained by the Ministry of Justice, there were 3,537 Muslim organizations in the Russian Federation, of which 59 were national structures, 3,397 were local entities, 68 were denominational schools and 13 were religious institutions.

In point of fact the number of Muslim associations significantly exceeds the number of those officially registered. On 1 January 2004 in the Republic of Dagestan, for example, there were 617 registered Muslim organizations, but there are many more working mosques.

Data to hand indicate that between 3,000 and 4,000 young Muslims are studying abroad, for example in Saudi Arabia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Qatar, Egypt, Turkey and the Syrian Arab Republic. Muslim clerics are ambivalent about the increase in the number of Muslims studying abroad. Many imams in the North Caucasus believe, with some justification, that young people who have studied in Muslim countries contribute to the rise of radical Islam (Wahhabism). Many of these young people are active members of religious extremist groups.

Extremism is a particular state of mind that exists among members of a given ethnic, religious or cultural community, and is characterized by overzealous belief in the superiority of certain professed ideas, total and unquestioning subordination of one's life to their embodiment, a refusal to admit the validity of any other perspective on the world, and a commitment to extreme and sometimes violent methods of attaining chosen ends.

An extremely complex situation continues to prevail in the Southern federal area, where religious extremist groups are active. Throughout almost the entire region there are structures acting in parallel with Muslim theological boards. Many are controlled by people who have studied abroad. Their ultimate aim is to form parallel power structures, change the constitutional order of the Russian Federation and establish independent states in Russian territory. Notwithstanding the best efforts of law enforcement and other State bodies, events in the Republic of Ingushetia and particularly in North Ossetia have shown that these measures are still inadequate to address the problem.

Commentators and Muslim clerics themselves note that, among measures to arrest the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, the federal authorities and regional governments must, as a matter of urgency, lend their support to mainstream Islamic religious associations.

The legal basis for cooperation along these lines is the Instruction of the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation dated 17 December 2002 on arrangements for cooperation between procuratorial agencies and human rights and other voluntary associations.

In order to uphold human and civil rights and freedoms and utilize the resources of Russian and international human rights and other voluntary organizations in this endeavour, the Procurator-General of the Russian Federation has made the following proposals, among others:

- To conduct meticulous, comprehensive and objective inquiries regarding information received from human rights and other voluntary organizations about unlawful acts by public and government bodies that have come to their attention, and illegal activities by officials that limit human and civil rights and freedoms in this sphere;
- To review applications from the leadership of these organizations to protect community interests or the rights of specific individuals in accordance with the procedures and deadlines established by the Instruction on the procedure for considering applications and receiving applicants in procuratorial bodies and institutions of the Russian Federation;

- Where necessary, to become involved in arrangements made by human right organizations and to keep them informed of procuratorial efforts to monitor observance of constitutionally guaranteed human and civil rights and freedoms.

It should also be noted that, in the context of greater cooperation between the procurator's office and voluntary and other organizations on upholding the rule of law in relations between the State and religious associations, and in interfaith relations, such cooperation should be in conformity with Russian law and the Procurator-General's requirements.

The formation of relations between the State and religious organizations is an extremely important and relevant topic.

Against the background of the current crisis in social conscience and the loss of social and spiritual reference points among large sections of the population, many people have tended to look for moral values in the context of traditional religions, including Islam.

Today, against the backdrop of the escalation in the terrorist threat, the increase in extremist activity and the growing number of extremist organizations concealing their criminal activities behind a pseudo-religious ideology and a tendentious, selective reading of sacred texts, a special place is reserved for community education by Islamic teachers who preach the ideas of peace and tolerance embodied by Islam.

It must be observed that, in the wake of infamous acts of terrorism all over the world, the ideology of the terrorist fanatics has been incorrectly identified with the world religion of Islam. To a great extent this is the fault of the media, which do not always cover these events with sufficient rigour and bandy around loose characterizations such as "Islamic terrorists" or "the Islamic threat". The upshot is that many people unfamiliar with the teachings of Islam and unversed in the Koran are exposed to fragmentary and often distorted second-hand information, and go on to form a false picture of this religion. A negative perception of specific individuals with sectarian views of world religion is extended to Islam as a whole. Accordingly, an adverse

consequence of the terrorist attacks in the Russian Federation in recent years has been a rise in xenophobia, specifically widespread Islamophobia and anti-Muslim feeling. Specialist research and press monitoring show that this is the case.

When taking action, the procurator's office is acutely mindful of the socio-political situation in the country and is careful to distinguish clearly between extremist religious groups and law-abiding believers. Legal steps may be taken against a cleric only if the case against him is very powerful, because religious communities react very badly to this kind of thing, interpreting any intervention as religious oppression of the faithful.

Procuratorial agencies have every reason to believe that the involved conflict in the North Caucasus has only a tenuous connection with genuine religious issues and interreligious strife. The region is witnessing the interplay of two complex processes, namely an intensification of organized crime and de facto external aggression against the Russian Federation waged by a number of parties including the secret services of certain foreign States.

There is a reason why terrorism has come to be seen, depending on circumstances, as a "surrogate war", as direct or indirect aggression. Many large-scale acts of terrorism in Russian territory have been organized and are still being planned by foreign citizens.

A characteristic feature of non-traditional means of waging war is the existence of "sponsoring States" that act covertly and deny their part in terrorist acts, and the involvement of intelligence experts and secret services that recruit and fund bands of mercenaries, often under diplomatic protection.

Criminal evidence and the opinions of law enforcement officers, the local population and convicted prisoners all indicate that terrorist leaders are motivated primarily by criminal gain that generates income and confers power.

Much more rarely do these leaders' activities have some connection with a desire to found an independent State and to pursue an independent national or other policy in the context of national traditions and customs, or to escape the control of the federal authorities and statutory responsibility for their crimes.

A certain proportion of rank and file members of criminal organizations and perpetrators of terrorist attacks justify their acts by reference to their leaders' separatist aspirations and desire to unite with the Muslim world and achieve the "victory of Islam". In the latter two cases, this is an offence against the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation.

We believe, therefore, that efforts to introduce harmony into the economic, political, social and spiritual life of society are a key strand in the national strategy to fight crime and terrorism and a sure bulwark against various forms of external aggression. We also understand that this is unachievable without effective efforts to fight the structures that organize aggression and international terrorism.

The promotion of a high level of religious culture and the prevention of religious fanaticism and intolerance are very important.

Fanaticism is always based exclusively on ignorance. The leaders of organized criminal groups actively exploit it. During interrogations, terrorists state that they committed such and such an act in the name of Islam. Yet, very often, they do not have even the faintest idea of what real Islam represents.

Investigative task forces in North Ossetia and other regions have been forced to use unconventional investigative techniques to deal with religious fanatics accused of offences. The accused are familiarized with the nature of the Holy Koran and the Bible. This makes it possible to overcome their complete ignorance of religious matters, obtain unbiased information and foil terrorist acts currently in preparation. One of the accused, who was involved in blowing up a bus at Mozdok bus station, said that any Muslim who embarks on jihad without a profound knowledge of his faith is a killing machine and traduces the holy religion of Islam.

To justify terrorism, some of the accused argue that Russia has sent troops into Chechnya and is killing the Muslim population because of their religion. This is the message of subversive propaganda on video cassettes entering the country from abroad and disseminated by terrorist organizations, while alternative sources of information about true Islam are unavailable. The result is a production line that turns out terrorist fanatics.

By way of counter-argument it is explained to the accused that there are roughly 20 million Muslims living in various parts of the Russian Federation, but no troops have been sent to these regions. The reason why the army has been sent into Chechnya has nothing to do with adherence to Islam, it is simply that the extremist leaders of Chechnya have organized a criminal state in the republic that engages in extortion and kidnapping of persons from North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Stavropol territory, Central Russia and Dagestan.

It should be noted that the Basic Provisions of the Social Programme of Russian Muslims formulated by the Council of Muftis of Russia state that, as far as Muslim organizations are concerned, peace and harmony in contemporary Russia mean, among other things, recognizing the legitimacy of Russian law and preserving spirituality, high morals, tolerance and fraternal relations between people from different ethnic backgrounds in society.

This stance by Russian Muslims is welcomed. It is essential that the peaceful aspirations of broad sections of the public should be realized as fully as possible throughout society.

To preserve civil peace and ensure the prosperity of the State and its constituent peoples, special attention is paid to preventing ethnic and religious intolerance.

Manifestations of religious intolerance are an extension of ethnic intolerance. In the Russian Federation today, it can be seen that adherents of different religions and religious organizations hold diverging views.

The existence of empirical historical, socio-economic and political factors fuelling the spread of xenophobia in Russian society makes the role of the State in developing and rigorously enforcing laws to prevent xenophobia particularly important.

Procuratorial agencies safeguard the interests of the community and are one of the few State institutions that can protect civil rights effectively. The Russian procurator's office, which regards oversight of compliance with laws on freedom of conscience, religious associations and the prevention of extremism as a priority area of its work, is open to cooperation with voluntary and religious organizations.

Efforts to combat religious intolerance in education

To strengthen tolerance and social harmony and promote interfaith dialogue, the Ministry of Education and Science is working with voluntary organizations and religious associations to put in place a series of measures advocating peacefulness and the prevention of xenophobia and ethnic and religious intolerance in society. These issues are high on the agenda of conferences, workshops and round-table discussions.

Article 3, paragraph 1, of the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations Act guarantees freedom of conscience and religious freedom. Obstruction of the right to freedom of conscience and religious freedom, including violence against the person, deliberately insulting citizens' religious sensibilities and advocating religious supremacy, are prohibited and liable to prosecution under federal legislation (art. 6).

Public bodies dealing with youth issues in the states of the Russian Federation are heavily involved in efforts to combat racism among young people. They assist voluntary children's and youth organizations, welfare institutions, foundations and other organizations. Prevention and rehabilitation schemes are being conducted at experimental centres in the regions to encourage the social integration of teenagers and young people who have been brainwashed by totalitarian organizations (including those of a religious nature) or are victims of xenophobia or inter-ethnic conflicts.

The Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act, which confirms the universal right to freedom of conscience and religion and equality before the law irrespective of attitude of religion and beliefs, places great importance on the promotion of mutual understanding, tolerance and respect in matters of freedom of conscience and religion. The Act prohibits any advantage, restriction or other form of discrimination on the basis of attitude to religion.

To strengthen tolerance and social harmony and promote interfaith dialogue, the Ministry of Education and Science is working with voluntary organizations and religious associations to put in place a series of measures advocating peacefulness and the prevention of xenophobia and ethnic and religious intolerance in society.

State education standards in secondary and higher vocational education incorporate humanities and socio-economic disciplines that prescribe study of the historical and cultural foundations of world religions. Furthermore, the training of extracurricular activity monitors with additional qualifications in youth policy includes a special study of the historical and cultural roots of religions and thereby promotes the development of tolerance and respect for all religions and their value systems.

The study of the history and culture of religion in educational institutions also strengthens tolerance and social harmony, develops interfaith dialogue, and shapes and develops a culture of communication and a humanistic world view among young people.

Optional courses on the history of religion and religious knowledge have been introduced in the senior classes of many State schools, and a number of textbooks have been prepared on world religions, history of religions and the basics of Orthodox culture.

According to current national general-education standards, study of the historical and cultural roots of world religions is included in the compulsory subjects “National history”, “The world about us”, “Literature”, “General history”, “History of Russia” and “Social studies”.

The new generation of history, literature and social science textbooks devote considerable space to the spiritual culture, everyday life and traditions of the peoples of the Russian Federation and the world.

In coordination with the Ministry of Education and Science, seminars attended by experts from the European Union were held in 24 states of the Russian Federation for various groups of education workers. They focused on issues such as staff training and refresher training, the new generation of history textbooks and the content of school history education, and yielded thought-provoking reports and research material. Interpretation of the results of this wide-ranging project has prompted the important conclusion that, as a result of efforts to date, the Russian public is already fairly receptive and ready to embark on a new phase, that of intercultural and interfaith dialogue as an overarching component in the education system as a whole. This is why the project’s frame of reference has been extended outside history lessons to embrace other substantive areas such as philology and the history of world religions (from the standpoint of cultural studies).

Given the escalating threat of religious extremism in the Russian Federation, there is an increasing need for a multifaceted approach to the development of religious education, primarily Muslim education. An extremely important component of such an approach is the establishment of a permanent, multilevel system to train specialists versed in Islamic history and culture for work in professional religious schools and private educational institutions. These specialists must be trained to shape an attitude of tolerance in their students and prevent discrimination and xenophobia, it being assumed that all national cultures and religions are equal.

The Ministry of Education and Science, acting on the instructions of the President and the Government and in partnership with the organizations concerned, has made arrangements for training specialists in the field of Islamic history and culture.

This training must serve as a basis for inculcating inter-ethnic and interfaith tolerance, preventing religious and inter-ethnic extremism, fanaticism and xenophobia, and encouraging students to form their views advisedly on the basis of knowledge and appreciation of the value systems and ethical practices of the world's religions.

At the National Civil Service Academy reporting to the President, the Government's Economic Academy and Financial Academy and the Regional Civil Service Academy, public officials are trained to carry out their official duties in a manner that respects different religions and beliefs.

The Constitution and the Education Act guarantee Russian citizens' right to an education. The Education Act states that Russian citizens are entitled to an education irrespective of their sex, race, language, descent, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, membership of voluntary organizations or associations, age, state of health, social status, wealth, official position, or whether they have a criminal record.

Article 43 of the Constitution states that every citizen has the right to an education. The Constitution further guarantees that preschool, basic general and secondary vocational education at public or municipal schools and at enterprises shall be accessible to all and free of charge. The Education Act enshrines general provisions on national education policy and educational activities in schools and colleges. Thus, article 5, paragraph 1, of the Act states that Russian

citizens are guaranteed an education irrespective of their sex, race, ethnicity, language, descent, attitude to religion, beliefs, age and state of health. Article 14, paragraph 4, of the Act states that educational content should promote mutual understanding and cooperation between peoples and nations irrespective of race, nationality, ethnicity, religious affiliation or social class, take account of diverse world views and encourage students to exercise their right freely to choose their opinions and beliefs.

Government Decision No. 629 of 25 August 2001 inaugurated the special federal programme entitled “Shaping an attitude of tolerance and preventing extremism in Russian society, 2001-2005” in the period 2001-2004, with the goal of developing a strategy for community security and cohesion in Russian society.

The programme aimed to establish tolerance guidelines prescribing how individuals and social groups should behave, as the basis for civil harmony in a democratic society.
