

Scientologists Arrested in Russia: An Open Letter to President Putin

We publish the text of a letter published in the Russian daily Kommersant on September 25, 2017 by a Who's Who of Russian human right activists, led by historical dissident Lyudmila Alexeyeva, whom Putin recently visited and honored in the occasion of her 90th anniversary

September 21, 2017

To the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin

OPEN LETTER

Dear Mr. President!

In St. Petersburg, the freedom guaranteed by the Constitution to choose and disseminate religious beliefs and act in accordance with them is openly undermined (Article 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation). You hold the highest public office in our country and act as guarantor of the Constitution. It is this circumstance that compelled us to send you a collective appeal on a matter that deeply affects our interests (Article 33 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation).

The events taking place in St. Petersburg can significantly damage the reputation of our country, which is especially dangerous for us in the run-up to the forthcoming election campaign for the President of the Russian Federation in 2018.

The circumstances that served as the basis for filing a collective appeal are the following.

In St. Petersburg on June 6, 2017, five people professing traditional Scientology were arrested; four of whom (Galina Shurinova, Anastasia Terentieva, Ivan Matsitsky, Sahib Aliyev) were detained, and the fifth - Konstantiya Esaulkova, got a preventive measure in the form of house arrest.

The basis for the criminal prosecution was the generally accepted actions of all Scientologists to publish so-called "ethics orders" against individuals - members of the Scientology community - who committed violations of Scientology and human ethics. The published "ethics orders" in accordance with the basic principles of Scientology are the institutional mechanism that guide organized community work, and is aimed at eliminating the consequences of identified ethical violations and at returning these individuals to further Scientology practice.

The mentioned facts were distorted beyond recognition by the "criminal persecutors". From the content of the charges brought against these individuals, it follows that they allegedly acted with extremist purposes, expressed and attempted to publicly degrade the dignity of persons who committed violations of intra-corporate or universal ethics.

The actions for which the above listed individuals have been imprisoned are daily committed in all communities of Scientologists in various countries of Europe, the Americas, Asia, Australia and Africa - in general, in more than 160 countries, and nowhere is this practice is recognized as a criminal act.

Vladimir Vladimirovich! We are not addressing you for the protection of Scientology. Some may like it, some not.

We ask you to take measures to protect the basics of our constitutional system; we appeal because, with respect to the Russian citizens – amongst them some are women –an exceptional measure of restraint has been applied in the form of custodial detention based on the silliest (another word simply cannot be picked) charges for actions that are guaranteed by the Russian Constitution.

We would not like to believe that the idea of legality has finally left Russia, and that the idea of permissiveness of law enforcement agencies has utterly replaced it.

Men and women, whose freedom is limited by the fact of pre-trial placement in prison, did not kill or main anyone or did not steal anything. They are not guilty of creating a "rule of law" in our country, according to which judges know only one measure of pre-trial restraint – arrest.

Stand up for your citizens who are unreasonably subjected to pre-trial prison sufferings, isolated from their relatives and friends. Take measures to restore the rule of law to those who peacefully profess the ideas of Scientology in full accordance with the world practice.

The appeal was signed by

Alekseyeva Lyudmila Mikhailovna, chairman of the Moscow Helsinki Group.

Evdokimova Natalia Leonidovna, member of the Presidential Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights. Executive Secretary of the Human Rights Council of St. Petersburg, Adviser to the Ombudsman for Human Rights in St. Petersburg

Finikova Lyudmila Nikolayevna, Coordinator of the International Committee of Civil Diplomacy (ICGD), Vice-President of the International Fund for Humanitarian Initiatives (IFGS). Special Commissioner of the ICHD and IFHI for the protection of the rights of children and youth.

Verkhovsky Alexander Markovich, a member of the Presidential Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights, the director of the information and analysis center "Sova".

Vinogradov Sergey Viktorovich, referent of the interregional public human rights organization "Committee for Civil Rights".

Iskandiyarov Gayar Akhmetovich, Chairman of the Fund for the Development of Muslim Peoples, member of the International Human Rights Assembly.

Babushkin Andrey Vladimirovich, chairman of the interregional public charitable organization "Committee for Civil Rights", a member of the council under the President of the Russian Federation for the development of civil society and human rights.

Dmitry Dubrovsky, Candidate of Historical Sciences, Associate Researcher, Center for Independent Social Research.

Sarantseva Anna Borisovna, medalist of the government prize for her contribution to the development of Russian culture and art. The author of the all-Russian children's animated series "Luntik". The founder of the Academy and the International Film Festival of Sunlight, co-founder of the Committee on Children and Youth Literature in St. Petersburg, winner of the regional St. Petersburg Prize "I am Mom!" 2016.

Zherebyatiev Mikhail Alekseyevich, religious scholar, candidate of philosophical sciences, associate professor, expert of the International Institute for Humanitarian and Political Studies.

Sergey Victorovich Dvoryanov, Candidate of Philosophy, Ambassador of Peace, author and presenter of the "Dialogue of Civilizations" program.

Raev Yevgeny Borisovich, two-time finalist of the show "Dancing with the Stars" on the channel "Russia", winner of audience sympathy (2nd place) in 2016, three-time finalist of the World Championships in Paris in dance, bronze medalist of the World Cup in 2013, bronze medalist of the championship of England, the silver medalist of Dutch Open Dutch Open in 2013.

Popov Andrey Valerievich, soloist of the Maryinsky Opera and Ballet Theatre, laureate of the Golden Mask Award, nominee of the Grammy Award.

Zhuk Oleg Dmitrievich, master of sports of the USSR in judo, master of sports of the USSR. World champion in sambo among veterans.

Rynchinov Albido Vladimirovich, Honored Master of Sports of Russia, winner of the World Games of the Deaf. Bronze medalist of the World Championship, European Champion. Three-time champion of the USSR among the deaf.

Kryzhov Sergey Borisovich, human rights activist, the first human rights ombudsman in the Moscow region.

Ivolga Ivan Viktorovich, musician, bass player. Ex-member of the band "Night Snipers".

Bolkhovitin Roman Stanislavovich, Chairman of the Board of the Foundation for Promoting the Development of Friendship of Peoples and National Cultures "Astana", the adviser of the Russian Federation of the first class.
Haydar Shah, an Afghan writer and poet, has Russian citizenship.

Volyansky Kirill Ivanovich, Candidate of Technical Sciences, developer of software and hardware systems.

Panteleev Boris Nikolaevich, human rights activist.

Abashev Anatoly Ivanovich, individual entrepreneur, mining engineer, 15-year work experience.

Gainutdinova Galina Mazgutovna, teacher, pensioner.

Dmitry Yuryevich Verevkin, Candidate of Economic Sciences

Senyukova Galina Petrovna, Engineer of "Krasnaya Zarya" plant, veteran of labor.

Mosyuk Igor Zinovievich, actor of theater and cinema. Awards - "The best role of the season."

Kozlova Olga Alexandrovna, artist, veteran of the II World War.

Bulyshev Andrey Viktorovich, pilot of civil aviation.

Golubenko Alexander Ivanovich, nuclear power engineer.

Smolyakov Victor Vasilyevich, the head of the company, was awarded with the International diploma "For social responsibility of business".

Smolyakova Galina Vladimirovna, licensed business consultant of the international level, the head of the company, holder of the title "Manager of the Year-2012".

Vorobyev Leonid, music producer, composer, arranger, sound producer, songwriter, author-performer, 25 years in Russian show business.

Tkachuk Lyubov Pavlovna, engineer-designer.

Gomboeva Yeshe Norbo Dymbrilovna, teacher. Direct blood niece of Hambo Lama Dashi Dorzho Itigelov. A pupil of Buddhist lamas in the territory of the Ivolginsky datsan.

Rodionova Tatyana Viktorovna, the guide of the City excursion bureau of St. Petersburg.

Marchenko Konstantin Vladimirovich, businessman, marketing specialist, honorary metallurgist of the company "Rusal".

Staritsyna Irina Grigoryevna, individual entrepreneur since 2007. The captain of militia of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in retirement, was awarded with diplomas for the best rehabilitation of the employees who arrived from Chechnya. In the past, the deputy director for the educational work of vocational schools, the author of pedagogical methods.

Serov Nikolay Viktorovich, Doctor of Cultural Sciences, author of the monograph "The World Icon of Religions" and hundreds of scientific articles of the domestic and foreign press.

Samuseva Margarita Nikolaevna, writer-publicist, medical worker.

Nikolaeva Tatyana Alekseevna, a teacher with 34 years of experience, the head of a kindergarten. Veteran of Labour. She was noted with gratitude from the Vologda City Education Department "For Quality and High Level of Educational Pedagogical Work".

Shchigolev Yury Vasilievich, lawyer of the Moscow Region Bar Association, Chairman of the Commission for the Defense of the Rights of Lawyers "Federal Union of Advocates of Russia", Master of Psychology, Associate Professor of Russian International Academy of Tourism.

Alexander Bobkov, deputy chairman of the executive committee of the public association "People".

Anatoly A. Rekant, human rights activist, independent expert at the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation.

Stroeveva Galina Vladimirovna, doctor of pedagogical sciences, expert of the "Criminon Center for Anti-Criminal Education and Social Rehabilitation of Offenders".

Demina Natalia Alexandrovna, full member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences named after V. I. Vernadsky, Candidate of Medical Sciences.

Kurbanov Murvat, deputy chairman of the "Talysh Revival" NGO.

Sosinskaya Marina Viktorovna, victim of political repression.

Khmyrov Andrey Serafimovich, pastor of the Methodist Church.

Vadim Viktorovich Bachikov, businessman, publicist.

Samusev Vladimir Nikolaevich, businessman, sponsor, sponsors the organization "For a world without drugs."

Belyavitser Albina Ivanovna, a medical worker, was awarded the medal "Excellent worker in public health", the nominee for the award "Honorary Citizen of Russia", "The Best Taxpayer of 2015-2016"

Salikhanova Magiza Seitkazanova, gynecologist, obstetrician, Tibetan medicine doctor. Experience - more than 20 years.

Romazonova Sohiba Shodieva, teacher at the Samarkand University. Dedicated to the rituals of the worship of the Muslim faith.

Filippova Tatyana Valentinovna, a pediatrician of the highest category. Experience - more than 20 years.

Dmitriev Boris Vladimirovich, a siege survivor, veteran of the II World War

Blokhina Lyubov Nikitichna, chemist. Plant "Severonickel". Experience - 27 years.

Mazurov Sergey Alexandrovich, candidate master of sport dances. Winner of the

European and Asian Championships. Silver medalist of the "Spartak" Cup. Bronze medalist of the championship of St. Petersburg.

Archipenko Bogdan Stanislavovich, athlete, swimmer. Champion in the Federal North-West District of St. Petersburg.

Nikulina Ettel Luzumovna, a siege survivor, veteran of the II World War

Sinilnikov Vyacheslav Ivanovich, lawyer. Chairman of the Board of the Autonomous Non-Commercial Organization "Baltic Center for Forensic Expertise".

Gavrilenko Eugene Nikolayevich, Art Director of the House of Friends of Dostoevsky.

Fedorov Dmitry Vyacheslavovich, founder of a cosmetic company, an entrepreneur.

Tatyana Valeryevna Leskova, founder of the cosmetic company, entrepreneur

Alekseyeva Tatiana Stanislavovna, founder of a cosmetic company, an entrepreneur.

Saitgaliev Marat Gabdul Khaevich, businessman.

Vrubel Ekaterina Vladimirovna, entrepreneur, laureate of the Ekaterina Dashkova medal of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences.

Shestayeva Svetlana Eduardovna, teacher, human rights activist.

Kusakin Vladimir Ilyich, businessman, publicist

Elena Liventsova, General Director of the National Foundation "Environmental Education", laureate of the National Ecological Prize named after V.V. Vernadsky.

Krasnova Valentina Yurievna, lawyer, candidate of political sciences, expert on the protection of children's rights.

Kruglov Andrey Vladimirovich, businessman.

Belyaeva Irina Vladimirovna, member of the board of the Moscow bank.

Turovskaya Lydia Maksimovna, prisoner of concentration camps (Auschwitz, Neuengamme, Prushkov)

Olkhova Xenia Maksimovna, prisoner of concentration camps (Auschwitz, Neuengamme, Prushkov).

Rogozhin Konstantin Lvovich, Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, General Director of the Non-profit organization "Interregional Fund" Topical Medical Technologies and Therapy Systems ".

Chorny Roman, a pediatrician.

Li Mila Anatolievna, an entrepreneur in the field of beauty, nominee for the Woman of the Year-2014 Award.

Irtegov Vyacheslav Arkadevich, anesthesiologist, resuscitator.

Pechkurova Tatyana Mikhailovna, a siege survivor, a pensioner, an administrative employee

Rodionov Roman Vasilievich, programmer and entrepreneur.

Tomasheva Valeria Viktorovna, director of the sewing studio, businessman.

Stepanko Yuri, first class military pilot, major, more than 20 years of service.

Tokar Elena Alekseevna, master of radio equipment factory, best master of the year in the Ministry of Radio Industry of the USSR, experience - 25 years.

Shoka Lyudmila Dmitrievna, medical worker, experience - 25 years.

Igonin Oleg Igorevich, programmer of applied mathematics ATI, experience - 20 years

Ilina Elena Aleksandrovna, the teacher of the highest category of the city of Surgut.

Zubkova Natalia Alexandrovna, obstetrician, experience - 30 years.

Lepkovskaya Lyudmila Ivanovna, retired, leading engineer of the Economic State Institute of Applied Chemistry. Experience - more than 20 years.

Yakub Renat Yakovlevich, an attorney. Work experience - more than eight years.

Fishova Zinaida Mikhailovna, engineer-technologist of the nuclear industry. Work experience - more than 30 years.

Petrova Elena Nikolaevna, a veterinarian. Work experience - 10 years.

Pastukhov Vladimir Vladimirovich, the captain of a long voyage, captain of ships up to 5 thousand tons. Experience - more than 40 years. Pensioner.

Saliy Zoya Pavlovna, Professor, Associate Professor of the Department of Economics, Novosibirsk Institute of Consumer Cooperatives. Experience - more than 40 years.

Saliy Vladimir Vasilyevich, Professor of the Department of Marketing, Novosibirsk Institute of Consumer Cooperatives.

Zhukov Valery Pavlovich, a survivor in the besieged Leningrad, a member of the Presidium of the regional public organization "St. Petersburg Regional Public Organization for Supporting Veterans and Patriotic Education" "Polar Convoy".

Fedyanova Nadezhda Ivanovna, editor of the magazine "Woman and Politics".

Polikukhina Svetlana Viktorovna, member of the environmental fund "Ametist", Moscow.

Chekmarev Gennady Anatolyevich, an attorney, teacher of law.

Goncharov Evgeny Brisovich, General Director of the company "Firm - Terminal"

Komkov Sergey Konstantinovich, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Law, Professor, member of the International Academy of Pedagogical Education, member of the International Academy of Spiritual Unity of Peoples of the World, member of the International Slavic Academy, member of the European Informatization Academy (Belgium) Academy of Sciences San Marino, First Deputy Chairman of the All-Slavic Committee, Member of the Presidium of the International Slavic Union, Director of the Russian House in Mariánské Lázně (Czech Republic), Member Union of Writers of Moscow