

**FEBRUARY 2015 MEDIA SURVEY
FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF IN FORMER SOVIET STATES**

AZERBAIJAN

Nakhichevan Detentions Without Trial, Beatings and Attempted Kidnapping; Forum 18:

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2038

Azerbaijani Authorities Use Tolerance Facade to Camouflage Serious Human Rights Violations; Panorama.am:

<http://www.panorama.am/en/politics/2015/02/14/religion-azerbaijan/>

Behind the Tolerance Facade: Freedom of Religion or Belief Restricted, NHC (Norwegian Helsinki Committee):

http://nhc.no/no/nyheter/Freedom+of+religion+restricted+in+Azerbaijan.b7C_wlnY1a.ips; the Norwegian Helsinki Committee has with Forum 18 published a report on freedom of religion or belief in Azerbaijan.

Court Satisfies an Appeal of Rasul Jafarov; International Organization for Legal Researches (IOLR):

<http://www.iolr.org/?m=20150127&lang=en>

Term of Arrest of Arif Yunus Extended for Five Months; Contact.az:

<http://contact.az/docs/2015/Politics/022300107600en.htm>

U.S. Congressmen, Analysts Urge Aliyev Government to Release Political Prisoners, Reopen RFE/RL Office;

Contact.az: <http://www.contact.az/docs/2015/Politics/021200106388en.htm>

State Language Will Be Taught in Azerbaijani Churches; (Russian); Vesti.az: <http://vesti.az/news/237596>

U.S. Jewish Groups Back Azerbaijan Despite Rights Concerns; RFE/RL:

<http://www.rferl.org/content/azerbaijan-lobby-us-rights/26847192.html>

Ilham Aliyev receives the head of the American Jewish Committee; Contact.az:

<http://contact.az/docs/2015/Politics/020200105059en.htm>

Ali Hasanov: Israel Is Our Strategic Partner; Contact.az:

<http://www.contact.az/docs/2015/Politics/020900105824en.htm>; Azeri-Israeli relations and Jewish minority activities in Azerbaijan.

Five Years' Imprisonment for "Normal Muslims" Who "Simply Conduct Prayers"?; Forum 18:

http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2037

New US Ambassador to Azerbaijan is Urged on Facebook to Visit Political Prisoners Upon His Arrival; Azeri

Report: http://azerireport.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4516&Itemid=53

Allahshukur Pashazadeh: There are Many Enemies Who Want to Take Advantage of Discrepancy Between Different Faiths and Sects in Azerbaijan; (Azerbaijani) Olaylar: <http://olaylar.az/news/social/116368>; (Russian)

Vesti.az: <http://vesti.az/news/237162>

Allahshukur Pashazade Met With the Head of the State Committee for Work With Religious Organizations;

(Russian) Vesti.az: <http://vesti.az/news/237592>

Sheikh, as a Fighter Against Terrorism; Contact.az:

<http://www.contact.az/docs/2015/Politics/022000107394en.htm>; head of Caucasus Muslims goes to peace conference in Saudi Arabia.

Sheikh Pashazade Proposes to Unite Islamic Authorities; Contact.az: <http://www.contact.az/docs/2015/Social/022500107872en.htm>; to prevent fratricide, the head of the Caucasian Muslims Office (CMO) Sheikh Pashazade invited all parties authoritative in the Islamic world to unite.

Representatives of European Association of Jehovah's Christian Witnesses Were Received at the Ombudsman Office; Azerbaijan Ombudsman's press release: <http://www.ombudsman.gov.az/view.php?lang=en&menu=33&id=1714>

Latest Secret Police Prisoners – Two Female Jehovah's Witnesses; Forum 18: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2041

In Azerbaijan Suggestions are Being Prepared Regarding the Standards of Graves; (Azerbaijani) Modern.az: <http://modern.az/articles/72565/>; as grave stone styles become a show of wealth and status, calls for standardization are getting louder.

List of Fethullah Gulen's Imams in Azerbaijan; (Azerbaijani) Yeni Çağ (New Age): <http://yenicag.az/?p=67608>

Religious Enlightenment in State Penitentiaries Continues; (Azerbaijani) Azerbaijani Ministry of Justice: <http://penitensiar.justice.gov.az/xeberler/1524.html>

Azeri Authorities Renew Attacks Against RFE/RL Journalists; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/release-update-azeri-authorities-renew-attacks-against-rferl-journalists-ismayilova-bakirov/26865003.html>

Another Mosque Forcibly Transferred to New Leadership; Forum 18: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2042

ARMENIA

Armenian Apostolic Church Canonizes Victims of Armenian Genocide; Ecumenical News: <http://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/armenian-apostolic-church-canonizes-victims-of-armenian-genocide-28232>

BELARUS

Slander and Obstruction to Keep Foreigners Out; Forum 18: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2040; foreign Catholic priests in Belarus are accused of breaking local laws.

Fined When "No Such Community" Met for Worship; Forum 18: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2035; police raided a Jehovah's Witness meeting in a private home in Borisov and a member was fined more than a month's average wage for holding an "unauthorized mass event." All religious activity without state registration and outside state-approved venues is banned under the harsh 2002 Religion Law and punishable.

CENTRAL ASIA

The Lure of Islamic State for Central Asians; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/qishloq-ovozi-lure-of-islamic-state/26835279.html>

KAZAKHSTAN

Former Rehab Centre Residents "Scared and Tired of Police Pressure;" Forum 18: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2034; Protestant-run drug and alcohol rehabilitation center closed by a Pavlodar Regional Court decision.

"A General Unwillingness to Properly Protect Human Rights;" Forum 18: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2043; Kazakhstan continues to jail people for exercising the right to freedom of religion or belief, and harass people exercising this right in public.

Mission to the Republic of Kazakhstan: Comments by the State on the Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt; (Russian) United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/28/66/Add.3

RUSSIA

RELIGION-STATE RELATIONS

People Imprisoned for "Extremist" - Nonconventional - "Crimes"; January 2015; SOVA (Center for Information and Analysis): <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/misuse/news-releases/2015/02/d31289/>; Russian: <http://www.sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/publications/2015/02/d31180/>

Lawyer Vladimir Ryakhovskiy: "The Court's Decision is Completely Illegal"; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/publications/2015/02/d31197/>; a court case involving a collective reading of the Bible at a café in Sochi by an Evangelical priest.

Regional Court Upheld Penalty for Café Bible Reading; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/harassment/intervention/2015/02/d31189/>

Hizb ut-Tahrir: 21 arrests; HRWF (Human Rights Without Frontiers) report of February 2014, on FSB arrest of 21 Muslims suspected of belonging to outlawed Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Politics Can Be Seen Under the Hijab; (Russian) Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Independent Newspaper): http://www.ng.ru/ng_religii/2015-02-18/1_hijab.html; Supreme Court of Russian Federation decided to uphold the earlier ban on wearing Islamic headscarves in public schools.

Russian Supreme Court Upholds Ban on Wearing Hijab at School; InterFax: <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=11829>

Church is not Fused With the State, But It Won't Be Driven into Ghetto; InterFax: <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=11808>

Ussuriysk Municipality Seized Land from Local Muslims on Which a Mosque is Situated Through a Court Order; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/harassment/places-for-prayer/2015/02/d31191/>

Vicious Violence from the Donbas Spreading Back into Russia; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/vicious-violence-from-donbas-spreading.html>

Balashikha Residents Oppose the Construction of Orthodox House of Worship in the City Park; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/community-media/communities-conflicts/2015/02/d31246/>

Stavropol Draft Law Regarding Missionary Work; Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF): <http://hrwf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Russia-2015.pdf#page=3&zoom=auto,68,567>; Russia Religion News: <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/150217c.html>

Kharkiv Terrorist Act Opens New and Horrific Stage in War in Ukraine, Milshteyn Says; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/kharkiv-terrorist-act-opens-new-and.html>

Putin's 'Hybrid Ideology' Internally Inconsistent and Won't Last Long, Shtepa Says; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/putins-hybrid-ideology-internally.html>

Archpriest's Story about Moscow's Last Days in 2043 Reflects Patriarchate's Deepest Fears; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/chaplins-story-about-moscows-last-days.html>

Orthodox Priest Gives Russians One More Thing To Worry About; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-orthodox-priest-novel-machaut-and-the-bears-shemaiyer-chaplin/26870612.html>; influential spokesman of the Russian Orthodox Church, Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin's "Machaut" – which describes the apocalyptic destruction of 2043 Moscow at the hands of Islamists, Ukrainians, and gays – seems less like the ravings of a lonely keyboard warrior and more like a well-informed window on what scares the Kremlin most.

Proposed Laws on Religion Reviewed in Presidential Administration; Russia Religion News (translated): <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/150218d.html>; InterFax (in Russian): <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=57910>

Russian Parliament to Get Legal Crackdown on Religious Organizations; Russia Religion News: <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/150203d.html>; Kommersant (in Russian): www.kommersant.ru/doc/2659333

Moscow, the Third Rome, May Suffer Fate of the Second Rather than the First, Latynina Suggests; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/moscow-third-rome-may-suffer-fate-of.html>

Moscow Patriarchate Said Opening the Way for Kadyrov to Succeed Putin and Islam to Dominate Russia; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/moscow-patriarchate-said-opening-way.html>

Russian Federal List of Extremist Materials Rose to p. 2612; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31343/>

Court Case of an Anti-Religious Advocate in Category "Atheism" Was Closed; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31351/>; a computer programmer was initially accused of offending religious feelings by posting materials online.

No More Jokes: Lifting the Ban on 50 of 68 Religious Materials Deemed Extremist in Orenburg; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/harassment/harassment-protection/2015/02/d31375/>

Opinions of the Clergy Regarding Religious Dress in Schools; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/discussions/society/2015/02/d31232/>; a Russian news agency published a compilation of views of the Russian Orthodox clergy on who should decide whether wearing hijabs in schools is permissible

Head of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia Asks Vladimir Putin to Protect Rights of Muslim Women; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/harassment/harassment-protection/2015/02/d31216/>; Ravil Gaynutdin sent an open letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin in defense of the right of Muslim women to wear headscarves in schools.

Sanctions Against Internet Service Providers, Part II; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/01/d31143/>; Part I: <http://www.sova-center.ru/misuse/news/persecution/2012/07/d24798/>; requests for Internet operators to block websites containing "extremist materials" recently increased.

Approaches to Coverage of Islam on Russian TV News: Familiarity with Trends and Contradictions of the Official Discourse Under Vladimir Putin; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/publications/2015/02/d31209/>; report by Prof. Stephen Hutchings and Dr. Kenzie Burchell.

Putin Moves to Take Full Control of Regional Television Channels; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/putin-moves-to-take-full-control-of.html>

A New Sect Emerges in Russia – ‘Putin’s Witnesses’; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/a-new-sect-emerges-in-russia-putins.html>; Russians are ironically calling “the Network,” as the Kremlin’s new youth movement is officially known, “Putin’s Witnesses” because its members are so ideologically committed and go from house to house to spread their ideas about the need for complete loyalty to Vladimir Putin and his regime.

Russian Ministry of Justice has Developed a Draft Law Regulating the Procedure for Inspections of Religious Organizations; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/legal-regulation/2015/02/d31185/>

Novgorod Student Fined for the Book "On the Way to the Koran" is a Citizen of Morocco; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31186/>

Decision to Recognize "Bailiff’s Piety" as Extremist Material Appealed; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2014/12/d30956/>; the court's decision in Vladimir on recognition of the film about the seizure of holy relics from the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church as extremist material was appealed at the court of second instance.

Materials Deemed Extremist, But not Included in the Federal List; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/docs/2009/12/d17655/>

Experts Say Conflict in North Caucasus Waning – But Far From Over; The Moscow Times: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/experts-say-conflict-in-north-caucasus-waning-but-far-from-over/516142.html>

(RUSSIA) ORTHODOX CHURCH

Moscow Patriarchate Dept. of External Church Relations Employee Arrested in Moscow for Treason While Working in Kiev; Russia Religion News: <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/150210a.html>

Ex-Employee of the Russian Orthodox Church Accused of Ties with Foreign Intelligence; Russia Religion News: <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/150210a.html>

Employee of Moscow Patriarchate Accused of Treason; Russia Religion News: <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/150210a.html>

The Spy Breathes His Last: Employee of Moscow Patriarchate Arrested in Case of High Treason; Russia Religion News: <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/150210a.html>

The Bishop of Novosibirsk is Convinced That Richard Wagner's Opera “Tannhäuser” Violates the “Rights of

Believers"; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/feelings/2015/02/d31290/>

Court Proceeding Initiated Against the Authors of "Blasphemous" Theatrical Performance in Novosibirsk; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/feelings/2015/02/d31346/>

Despite Public Displays of Piety, 'Orthodox Atheism' Spreading in Russia, Kolymagin Says; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/01/despite-public-displays-of-piety.html>

Just Raw Data of Numbers; (Russian) LiveJournal: <http://diak-kuraev.livejournal.com/769506.html>; Portal-Credo.ru: <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=monitor&id=22379>; "Orthodox Encyclopedia" tells us about Russian Orthodoxy in numbers, indicating that articles regarding present Patriarchs is more voluminous than that of God.

Moscow Should Give Autocephaly to Ukrainian Orthodox Now to Cut Its Losses, Kurayev Says; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/moscow-should-give-autocephaly-to.html>

Ryazan Kremlin Will Be Transferred to the Russian Orthodox Church in 2018; (Russian) Izvestia: <http://izvestia.ru/news/583184>; a new building will be built for the evicted Historical and Architectural Museum-Reserve.

Widespread Support among Russians for Non-Traditional Families Disturbs Orthodox; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/widespread-support-among-russians-for.html>

(RUSSIA) ISLAM

Hizb ut-Tahrir member convicted in Russia's Dagestan; RAPSİ (Russian Legal Information Agency): <http://rapsinews.com/news/20150212/273158830.html>

In Bashkortostan More Than 20 Muslims Detained for Connections with Hizb ut-Tahrir; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31214/>

Why Is the Death Toll Tumbling in the North Caucasus?; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/insurgency-north-caucasus-terrorism-isis/26840778.html>

Moscow Muslims Ask for Land for the Construction of a Mosque Named After Vladimir Putin; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/elections/2015/02/d31288/>

Moscow Muslims Want to Use Trailers as 'Mobile' Mosques; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-moscow-muslims-mull-mobile-mosques/26845340.html>

In Saratov Region Muslims Through Court Upheld the Right of Ownership of a Mosque; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/harassment/places-for-prayer/2015/02/d31361/>

Tyumen Oblast Authorities Annulled Earlier Decision to Allocate Land for Mosque Construction; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/harassment/places-for-prayer/2015/02/d31372/>

Radicalization Fears Grow in Tatarstan After Locals Convicted for Fighting in Syria; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/islamic-state-tatarstan-radicalization-syria-fighting/26837794.html>

Muslims Want a City Where They Form the Majority Shifted from Russian Region to Tatarstan; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/muslims-want-city-where-they-form.html>

A "Dangerous" Muslim from Uzbekistan Detained in the Kirov Region; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31331/>; citizen of Uzbekistan was detained in Kirov region for possible dissemination of extremist literature and banned from Russia for three years.

In Russia, Kazakh Accused of Recruiting Students for Islamic State; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/kazakhstan-recruitment-islamic-state/26833481.html>

Ingush Oppositionist, Family Under Renewed Pressure; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/ingush-oppositionist-family-under-renewed-pressure/26816464.html>; Republic of Ingushetia authorities try to defame oppositionist Magomed Khazbiyev and members of his family in a bid to curtail his political activities.

Ingush Opposition Activist Detained in Chechnya; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/khazbiev-being-held-in-chechnya-his-lawyer-says/26833790.html>

Praying Muslim Man Was Beaten by Shopping Mall Security Guards; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/murders-violence/2015/02/d31344/>; Islam News: <http://www.islamnews.ru/news-451820.html>

A Muslim Community in the Tyumen Region Was Abolished for Wrongfully Banned Literature; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31349/>

Internet Article About Muslim Children Upbringing Was Found as Extremist by Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk Court; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31356/>

Criminal Case Initiated in Chechnya on Insulting Feelings of Believers; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/feelings/2015/02/d31362/>

Islamic State Part of Western Plot Against Islam, Says Chechen Leader; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/islamic-state-kadyrov-western-plot-wahhabism/26833493.html>

Three Ulyanovsk Residents Convicted of Studying Nursi's Books, Two Received Jail Terms; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31365/>; Turkish theologian Said Nursi's books are banned in Russia for allegedly propagating religious hate and pan-Turkism.

"Thieves" of Christmas; (Russian) Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Independent Newspaper): http://www.ng.ru/ng_religii/2015-02-04/4_xmas.html; an opinion article of a Russian professor from Moscow State Linguistic University accusing the Council of Muftis of Russia of imitating the Moscow Patriarchate.

Supreme Court of Tatarstan Upheld the Ban on Excerpts from the Collection of Hadiths of al-Bukhari; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31225/>; those parts of the collection of hadiths, or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, that deal with jihad were banned by the court.

Imam in Yakutia Fined for Possession of Banned Literature in the Mosque; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31205/>; two books of Turkish theologian Osman Nuri Topbash from the series "History of the Prophets" were previously banned by the Beloyarskii City Court.

Prisoner of Adygea Colony Prosecuted for Wrongfully Banned Book; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31192/>; administrative case was filed against a prisoner for the distribution of extremist materials, namely the book of Safi al-Rahman al-Mubarakfuri titled "Life of the Prophet."

Russia's Muslims, Ready to Protest, Seek Shariat Guidance on Demonstrations; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/russias-muslims-ready-to-protest-seek.html>; Muslims in the

Russian Federation are now angry enough that they are thinking about taking part in public protests but prefer to refer to Islamic Shariah law rather than Russian law on this matter.

(RUSSIA) OTHER RELIGIONS

Russian Chauvinism is the Gravedigger of the Russian Imperial Idea, Pokrovskaya Says; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/russian-chauvinism-is-gravedigger-of.html>

United States of Siberia, or Charismatic "Rehabilitation" of Russia in a Particular Region; (Russian) Russian National Line:
http://ruskline.ru/analitika/2015/02/17/soedinyonnye_shtaty_sibiri_ili_harizmaticheskaya_reabilitaciya_rossii_v_otdelno_vzyatom_regione/; neo-Pentecostals “disguised as medical rehabilitation from alcohol and drug addiction” are perceived as a threat to Russian unity.

Khabarovsk Media Accused Tourists, Fined for Violating Immigration Laws, of "Enlisting New Adherents"; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/community-media/media-conflicts/2015/02/d31230/>; US tourists, detained and fined for violating immigration laws in Khabarovsk Krai, were filming a documentary about Nanai people. Local media found it necessary to emphasize that the visitors are Pentecostal missionaries.

Building of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Sealed in Saratov; Russia Religion News: <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/150205c.html>; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/harassment/intervention/2015/02/d31224/>

Saratov Mormons: "They Are Trying to Make Us a Part of the War of Sanctions;" Russia Religion News: <http://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/150205c.html>; (Russian) FreeNews-Volga: <http://fn-volga.ru/news/view/id/28754>

Russian Mormons Outraged by TV News Segment Shown on Channel Five in Early February; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/community-media/media-conflicts/2015/02/d31325/>; Russian representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints protest against defamation.

Court Overturned Temporary Closure of House of Worship of Mormons in Saratov; (Russian) FreeNews-Volga: <http://fn-volga.ru/news/view/id/29575>

A Christian Student Opposed the Construction of Saratov Mormon House of Worship; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/community-media/communities-conflicts/2015/02/d31203/>

"Young Guard" of Novosibirsk Demands to Check the Legality of Land Allocation to Mormons; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/community-media/communities-conflicts/2015/02/d31336/>

Russian Federation Supreme Court Decision Sets Dangerous Precedent for Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia; Jehovah's Witnesses (JW): <http://www.jw.org/en/news/legal/by-region/russia/supreme-court-ban-witnesses-samara/>

Customs Officers Confiscated Religious Literature of Jehovah's Witnesses Imported from Finland; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/harassment/discrimination/2015/02/d31366/>

Parliament Member Requests Inspection of Russian Scientology Church; Russian Legal Information Agency (RAPSI): http://rapsinews.com/judicial_news/20150219/273200870.html

In St. Petersburg a Rally Against the Church of Scientology; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/community-media/communities-conflicts/2015/02/d31338/>

Russian Lutherans Stigmatized as 'Foreign Agents'; Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF) and reprinted by International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF):
http://www.iirf.eu/documents/fileadmin/user_upload/Journal/index.php?id=334&no_cache=1&L=%271&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=311&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=7365; HRWF (PDF version): <http://hrwf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Russia-2015.pdf#page=5&zoom=auto,68,400>

Yekaterinburg Court Confirmed the Legality of Construction of Lutheran Church in Blucher Park; (Russian) SOVA: <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/community-media/communities-conflicts/2015/02/d31193/>

TAJIKISTAN

'Unawareness' of Islam May Be Feeding Tajik Extremism; RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/tajikistan-islam-education/26842429.html>

Radical Islamists Seeking to Join and Use Tajikistan Communist Party; Window on Eurasia (Blog):
<http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/01/radical-islamists-seeking-to-join-and.html>

Torture in Tajikistan Is Not Yet Eradicated; (Russian) RFE/RL:
<http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/26839665.html>; seven human rights organizations issued a joint statement noting that 20 years after the signing of the Convention Against Torture in Tajikistan, torture is still widespread.

Torture Still Widespread in Tajikistan 20 Years After the Country Acceded to Anti-Torture Treaty; International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR): <http://www.iphronline.org/torture-still-widespread-in-tajikistan-20150210.html>

TURKMENISTAN

Unpublished Census Provides Rare and Unvarnished Look at Turkmenistan; The Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor:
http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=43529&cHash=e285a27f408286923c9b4c0ab99ce085#.VOT4L_nF_Yg

Basmachis Seen Returning to Turkmenistan; Window on Eurasia (Blog):
<http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/01/basmachis-seen-returning-to-turkmenistan.html>; anti-Soviet fighters of the 1920s in Central Asia known as Basmachis return to Turkmenistan from Afghanistan.

Two Amnestied Prisoners, Conscientious Objector in Hospital, Beaten "Wahhabis"; Forum 18:
http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2039; two religious prisoners, a 32-year-old Protestant and a 21-year-old Jehovah's Witness, were freed under amnesty from the general regime labour camp in Seydi in eastern Turkmenistan. Five prisoners convicted of "Wahhabism" were brought into the strict-regime labour camp in Seydi where prison guards subjected them to brutal beatings.

UKRAINE

Sevastopol City Court Upheld the Decision of Arresting a Member of Hizb ut-Tahrir; (Russian) SOVA:
<http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31292/>

Court Upheld the Decision to Arrest Another Member of "Hizb ut-Tahrir" in Crimea; (Russian) SOVA:
<http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/extremism/counter-extremism/2015/02/d31329/>

Moscow's Efforts to 'De-Turkify' Crimea Outrageous and Absurd, Crimean Tatar Editor Says; Window on Eurasia (Blog): <http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/02/moscows-efforts-to-de-turkify-crimea.html>

Status of Religious Freedom in Crimea Today, by Catherine Cosman, USCIRF; International Committee for Crimea: <http://www.iccrimea.org/reports/status-freedom-of-religion-crimea.html>

Protestantism in Ukraine in 2014. Events, Trends, Challenges and Prospects; Religious Information Service of Ukraine: http://risu.org.ua/en/index/expert_thought/analytic/58704/

Protecting the Russian World; Religious Freedom Blog: <http://www.rmfreedom.com/news/2015/2/18/protecting-the-russian-world.html>; Christians of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine are systematically prosecuted by Russian government and pro-Russian separatists.

Washington DC Special Roundtable Consultation, Feb 4 2015. Documents; Religious Freedom Blog: <http://www.rmfreedom.com/documents/2015/2/10/washington-dc-special-roundtable-consultation-feb-4-2015-doc.html>; collection of speeches given on the rights of minorities in the occupied territories of Eastern Ukraine and Crimea.

U.S. Concerned Over Religious Persecution in the Occupied Territories of Ukraine; Religious Information Service of Ukraine: http://risu.org.ua/en/index/all_news/ukraine_and_world/international_relations/59032/

Kidnappings, Torture of Christians on the Rise in Ukraine; Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN): <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2015/February/Kidnappings-Torture-of-Christians-on-the-Rise-Ukraine/>; Protestants and Catholics are described as opponents or enemies of the Russian state and pro-Russian rebels.

The War and the Orthodox Churches in Ukraine; The Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume; http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=43548&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=228&cHash=5c875710c3267a4e3ec1fb4f1d41dffa

Leaders of Self-Proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics Made Anti-Semitic Statements; National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry (NCSEJ) and U.S.-Ukraine Business Council (USUBC): <http://www.usubc.org/site/member-news/import-licensing-of-active-pharmaceutical-ingredients-has-been-abolished>

Orthodox Church Leader Reflects on the Religious Dimension of the Ukrainian Crisis; EurasiaNet Interview: <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/71756>

Patriarch Kirill Calls for End to Persecution of Ukraine's Orthodox Christians; InterFax: <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=11809>

Patriarch Kirill Thanks Vatican for Balanced View on Ukraine Crisis; InterFax: <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=11810>

UZBEKISTAN

Khairulla Hamidov: I Am Glad to Be Released!; (Uzbek) RFE/RL: <http://www.ozodlik.org/content/article/26842496.html>

Popular Uzbek Journalist Released From Prison, RFE/RL: <http://www.rferl.org/content/uzbekistan-journalist-freed/26842841.html>

Journalist and Theologian Khairullo Khamidov Released Early From Prison; (Russian) Ferghana Information Agency: <http://www.fergananews.com/news/23072>

Prominent Religious Figure Freed: Hamidov's Release Should Extend to Others Politically Charged; Human Rights Watch (HRW): <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/02/17/uzbekistan-prominent-religious-figure-freed>

Mass Release of Believers Under the Amnesty; (Russian) Initiative Group of Independent Human Rights Defenders; human rights activists, independent journalists and some experts consider the upcoming presidential elections in Uzbekistan as the reason behind the reports of mass releases of prisoners on religious grounds.

Appeals Panel of Judges Left Unchanged the Verdict of Tashkent Regional Court of 21/24/2015; (Russian) IGNDPU; the sentence of six defendants in "Norwegian Case" was upheld. Charges included encroachment on the constitutional order of the Republic of Uzbekistan, production or dissemination of materials containing a threat to public security and order, and others.

Detention, Fine, Literature Confiscation Was "Hospitality We Got For Bringing Mandarins"; Forum 18: http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2036

Appeal to Citizens of Uzbekistan: "Not to Vote for the Candidature of Islam Karimov, or Boycott Elections"; (Russian) TuronZamin: <http://turonzamin.org/2015/02/02/ob-2/>