

ТМД ЕЛДЕРІНДЕГІ МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК ДІНТАНУ САРАПТАМАСЫНЫҢ ЕРЕКШЕЛКТЕРІ ЖӘНЕ ДІНИ ЭКСТРЕМИЗМНІҢ АЛДЫН АЛУДАҒЫ РӨЛІ

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مميزات خبرة الدولة في مجال الدراسات الدينية في دول رابطة الدول المستقلة
ودورها في منع التطرف الديني

تيميربايف طلعت
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دكتور في الجامعة المصرية للثقافة الإسلامية
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FEATURES OF THE STATE RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXPERTISE IN THE CIS COUNTRIES AND THE ROLE IN THE PREVEN- TION OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

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ОСОБЕННОСТИ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ РЕЛИГИОВЕДЧЕСКОЙ ЭКСПЕРТИЗЫ В СТРАНАХ СНГ И ЕЕ РОЛЬ В ПРОФИЛАКТИКЕ РЕЛИГИОЗНОГО ЭКСТРЕМИЗМА

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Андратпа. Бұл мақала Қазақстан, Ресей Федерациясы, Беларусь, Қыргызстан, Өзбекстан және Тәжікстандың қоса алғанда, Тәуелсіз Мемлекеттер Достастығы (ТМД) елдерінде мемлекеттік дінтану сараптамасын жүргізу тәжірибесін талдайды. Мақалада сараптама жүргізу әдістері мен тәжірибелері, сондай-ақ оның діни экстремизм идеологиясына қарсы тұрдағы рөлі қарастырылған. Заннаманы, реесми құжаттардың және академиялық зерттеулердің талдау арқылы діни қызметті бақылау тетіктерінің тиімділігі бағаланады. Макалада діни саясат контекстінде осы елдердің алдында тұрған негізгі проблемалар мен сын-қатерлер қамтылған және діни экстремизм қатерлерін ескере отырып, мемлекеттік дінтану сараптамасы процесін жетілдіру бойынша ұсынымдар ұсынылған. Зерттеу жұмысы ТМД елдеріндегі діни саланы реттеу тетіктерін түсінуді көнектігепе және діни экстремизмге қарсы іс-қимыл мақсатында осы тетіктерді жақсарту жолдарын іздеуге бағытталған.

Түйін сөздер: Дінтану сараптамасы, ТМД, дін, діни экстремизм, мемлекеттік-конфессиялық қатынастар.

الملخص: تحلّل هذه المقالة تجربة الخبرة الدينية الرسمية في رابطة الدول المستقلة (CIS)، وهي كازاخستان، والاتحاد الروسي، وبيلاروسيا، وقيرغيزستان، وأوزبكستان، وطاجيكستان. وتناولت المقالة الأساليب والممارسات المتتبعة في تلك الدول ودورها في التصدي لأيديولوجية التطرف الديني. ومن خلال تحليل القوانين والوثائق الرسمية والأبحاث الأكاديمية، يتم تقييم فعالية الآليات المعتمدة لمراقبة النشاط الديني. تتضمن المقالة المشكلات والتحديات الرئيسية التي تواجه هذه الدول في سياق السياسة الدينية، وتقدم توصيات لتحسين إجراءات الخبرة الدينية الحكومية، على نحو يراعي ما يمثله التطرف الديني من تهديدات. تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى توسيع فهم آليات تنظيم المجال الديني في رابطة الدول المستقلة، والبحث عن سبل تحسين هذه الآليات من أجل مواجهة التطرف الديني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخبرة الدينية، رابطة الدول المستقلة، الدين، التطرف الديني، العلاقات بين الدولة والمؤسسات الدينية.

Abstract. This article analyses the experience of state religious expertise in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The article examines the methods and practices of the expertise, as well as its role in countering the ideology of religious extremism. Through analyses of law, official documents and academic research, the effectiveness of mechanisms for controlling religious activity is assessed. The article contains the main problems and challenges faced by these countries in the context of religious policy, and offers recommendations for improving the process of state religious expertise, taking into account the threats of religious extremism. The paper aims to broaden understanding of the mechanisms of religious sphere regulation in the CIS countries and to find ways to improve these mechanisms in order to counter religious extremism.

Keywords: Religious expertise, CIS, religion, religious extremism, state-confessional relations.

Аннотация. Данная статья анализирует опыт проведения государственной религиоведческой экспертизы в странах Содружества Независимых Государств (СНГ), включая Казахстан, Российскую Федерацию, Беларусь, Кыргызстан, Узбекистан и Таджикистан. В статье рассмотрены методы и практики проведения экспертизы, а также ее роль в противодействии идеологии религиозного экстремизма. Через анализ законодательства, официальных документов и академических исследований оценивается эффективность меха-

низмов контроля за религиозной деятельностью. Статья содержит основные проблемы и вызовы, с которыми сталкиваются данные страны в контексте религиозной политики, и предлагает рекомендации по совершенствованию процесса государственной религиоведческой экспертизы с учетом угроз религиозного экстремизма. Исследовательская работа направлена на расширение понимания механизмов регулирования религиозной сферы в странах СНГ и на поиск путей улучшения этих механизмов с целью противодействия религиозному экстремизму.

Ключевые слова: Религиоведческая экспертиза, СНГ, религия, религиозный экстремизм, государственно-конфессиональные отношения.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, issues related to religion remain important and relevant for many societies. The countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are no exception; their cultural and social heritage is closely linked to religious traditions and practices. In this context, special attention is paid to state religious expertise – a process aimed at analyzing and evaluating religious phenomena and organizations from the point of view of their compliance with legislation, ensuring public safety and preserving civil rights and freedoms.

In this article we propose to consider the peculiarities of state religious expertise in the CIS countries. This issue is important for understanding the socio-cultural context of the region and the evolution of religious policy in post-Soviet states.

We will focus on analyzing the methods used in conducting such expertise, as well as the legal and socio-political aspects of this process. Consideration of these aspects will allow us to assess the effectiveness of mechanisms of control over religious activity in the context of contemporary challenges and problems.

The choice of the topic of this study is conditioned by the relevance of the problem of religious policy in the CIS countries and the need to analyze the mechanisms of state control over religious activities in this

region. Religion plays a significant role in the cultural, social and political life of many CIS countries, and regulation of the religious sphere is a key aspect of state policy.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the peculiarities of state religious expertise in the CIS countries and to assess its effectiveness at the present stage.

The research methods were qualitative content analysis of normative bases of CIS countries, research interviews with experts from CIS countries. The sources were legislation in the sphere of religious activity, scientific publications, materials of expert interviews.

Main part

In modern society, issues of regulation of the religious sphere remain at the intersection of state policy, human rights and socio-cultural traditions. One of the key tools used by CIS countries to control religious activity is religious expertise. This process is based on the analysis and assessment of religious phenomena and organizations in terms of their compliance with legislation and ensuring public safety. In this section, we offer an overview of the legal and regulatory documents governing religious expertise in the CIS countries. The analysis of these documents will allow us to better understand the legal basis of this process, as well as to identify the

peculiarities and differences in approaches to conducting religious expertise in different countries of the region. Special attention will be paid to the authorized bodies responsible for conducting and supervising this type of expertise, their functions and powers within the framework of religious sphere regulation.

Republic of Kazakhstan

Currently, religious expertise is regulated by several legal acts, including the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Religious Activity and Religious Associations" (1) of 11 October 2011, No. 483-IV, as well as "Rules for Conducting Religious Expertise" (2) of 30 December 2014, No. 162.

The authorized agency for conducting religious expertise is the Committee on Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Information and Public Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The peculiarities of the procedure of religious expertise include qualification requirements for experts. The legislation reflects the list of specialties of experts engaged for religious expertise: religious studies, theology, Islamic studies.

Another peculiarity is the possibility of submitting an application for religious expertise through the web portal "E-government" along with the traditional submission through the office of the authorized agency.

It should also be noted that Kazakhstan is implementing the information system "KiberNadzor". Within the framework of which religious expertise is conducted on materials with religious content in order to promptly block extremist content on the Internet.

Russian Federation

Currently, religious expertise (state religious expertise is the official name used in the Russian Federation) is regulated by

several legal acts, including the Federal Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" (3) of 19 September 1997 (as amended on 11.06.2021, No. 169-FZ) and the Russian Government Resolution "On the Procedure of State Religious Expertise" (4) as amended on 08.12.2008, No. 930.

The Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation and territorial agencies of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation is the authorized agency for conducting the state religious expertise.

The state religious expertise in the Russian Federation is appointed at the time of state registration of a religious organization with the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation. The expertise is carried out by a Council of Experts. The Council of Experts includes employees of state authorities, specialists in the field of religious studies, relations between the state and religious associations. Specialists who are not members of the Council of Experts, as well as representatives of religious organizations, may participate in the work of the Council of Experts as consultants. The expertise is commission-based and comprehensive. A single digital database, the Federal List of Extremist Materials, has been created in the Russian Federation. Extremist materials can be accessed in only three libraries in the Russian Federation for comparative expertise, research work and the preparation of anti-extremist propaganda materials. Experts are constantly improving their qualifications and participating in international events, which has a positive impact on the quality of their reports (5).

Republic of Belarus

The legal basis for religious expertise (state religious expertise is the official name used in the Republic of Belarus) is the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" of 17 December 1992, No. 2054-XII (6) and the

“Regulations on the Expert Council under the Commissioner for Religious and Ethnic Affairs and the procedure for conducting state religious expertise” (7).

The agency authorized to conduct religious expertise is the Commissioner for Religious and Ethnic Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus.

Religious expertise is of a commission and comprehensive nature. The legal framework reflects the rights and duties of the expert. The names of the members of the Expert Council conducting the expertise are not subject to disclosure.

Kyrgyz Republic

The legal basis for religious expertise in the Kyrgyz Republic is the Law “On Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic” of 31 December 2008 № 282 (8), the Regulation “On the State Commission on Religious Affairs in the Kyrgyz Republic” of 23 March 2012 № 71 (9).

The agency responsible for conducting the process of religious expertise is the State Commission on Religious Affairs under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic.

One of the peculiarities of the process of researching religious literature in the Kyrgyz Republic is the presence of theological expertise along with religious expertise.

Another important feature is the conduct of complex expertise with the participation of experts in philology, linguistics and psychology, which improves the quality and comprehensiveness of religious expertise. In addition, the Kyrgyz Republic regularly organizes training courses for experts in the field of religious studies. Experts actively participate in international research projects, thus establishing international cooperation with the world's leading experts in the field of religion (10).

Republic of Uzbekistan

State religious expertise in the Republic of Uzbekistan is regulated by the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” of 14 June 1991 No. 289-XII (11) and the Decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “Regulations on the Procedure of Production, Import and Distribution of Materials with Religious Content on the Territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan” (12) and “Regulations on the Procedure of Conducting a State Religious Expertise of Materials with Religious Content” of 20 January 2014 No. 10 (13).

The authorized agency for conducting religious expertise is the Committee on Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers.

One of the main features of the process of religious expertise in Uzbekistan is short terms. Along with this fact, another feature should be highlighted, which is expressed in the introduction of the component of theological expertise into religious expertise. Thus, according to the Law and Regulations governing the procedure of conducting expertise in the name of the service is defined as “state religious expertise”, at the same time in the definition of “report of expertise” the following wording is given: “a written document, officially fixing the fact of conducting theological research in relation to materials of religious content on the presence of deviations or distortions from religious canons ...” (12, P. 2). When conducting religious expertise, theologians of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, the Orthodox Church in Uzbekistan and other religious organizations are involved. This indicates the commission and complex nature of the reports of religious expertise. To study and analyses electronic materials, special computer software is used, which is able to analyses the content and help the expert in his work (14).

Republic of Tajikistan

The legal basis for conducting religious expertise in the Republic of Tajikistan is the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations” dated 26 March 2009, No. 489 (15) and the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Approval of the Procedure for State Religious Expertise” dated 2 July 2009, No. 389 (16).

The agency authorized to conduct religious expertise is the Committee on Religion, Regulation of National Traditions, Celebrations and Rites under the Government of Tajikistan.

The main features of the procedure of religious expertise in Tajikistan include the classification of types of expertise, rights and obligations of experts conducting expertise. Thus, normative legal acts reflect the following types of expertise: primary, additional, repeated, commission and complex. An expert has the right to refuse to give an opinion if the questions raised are beyond the scope of his special knowledge.

The role of religious expertise in the prevention of religious extremism

The role of religious expertise in the prevention of religious extremism is an important aspect of state policy to ensure public safety and prevent religiously motivated conflicts. This section analyses the contribution of religious expertise in combating religious extremism in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Religious extremism poses a serious threat to the stability and security of society. Often based on distorted interpretations of religious teachings, it can lead to violence, terrorist acts and undermine state security. In this context, religious expertise plays a key role in identifying and analyzing ideas and activities that promote extremist views under the guise of religion.

One of the main tasks of religious expertise is to identify and analyses religious materials that call for violence, discrimination or extremist activities. Experts in this field conduct a thorough analysis of texts, sermons, Internet resources and other materials in order to identify potentially dangerous and extremist ideas.

Reports obtained as a result of religious expertise play an important role in the timely identification and blocking of extremist materials, as well as preventing their dissemination. The expertise allows analyzing the content of religious texts, video, audio and Internet materials from the point of view of the presence of extremist ideas and calls to violence.

With the help of religious expertise, signs of extremist ideology that may be inherent in certain religious groups or organizations are identified. This allows law enforcement agencies and other competent institutions to take measures to block and remove dangerous materials from public access.

By promptly responding to the results of religious expertise, it is possible to prevent further dissemination of extremist materials among the population. This helps to reduce the risk of radicalization and prevent possible terrorist acts based on extremist ideology.

Thus, the reports of religious expertise are an important tool in combating religious extremism, providing an opportunity to promptly respond to security threats and prevent the spread of extremist materials in society.

Moreover, religious expertise allows to identify and analyze organizations and communities associated with religious extremism. This allows state agencies to effectively control and suppress the activities of such organizations, preventing the spread of their ideology and possible terrorist actions.

Thus, religious expertise is an important tool in the prevention of religious extremism, helping CIS states to identify, analyze and suppress the activities of extremist organizations and ideologues, as well as to prevent possible threats to public security and stability.

Criticism of religious expertise

The section on criticism of religious expertise represents an important aspect in the discussion of the effectiveness and legitimacy of this instrument in the context of the state regulation of the religious sphere. Despite the fact that religious expertise is widely used in various countries, its work is also subject to criticism and doubts on the part of various public and human rights organizations. The following are the main aspects of criticism of this tool:

1. Political interference and censorship: One of the main criticisms of religious expertise is that it can be used for political purposes and to censor religious opinions that differ from the official line of the authorities. This can lead to restrictions on freedom of religion and religious expression.

2. Subjectivity and arbitrariness: Critics also point out that the process of conducting religious expertise is often subjective and subject to arbitrariness. The evaluation of materials and expressions may be influenced by the expert's opinion or by political and ideological preferences.

3. Human rights violations: Concerns have been raised about possible violations of human rights, including the right to freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to privacy.

4. Lack of transparency and accountability: Some critics point to a lack of transparency and accountability in the religious expertise process. This lack of openness can create opportunities for abuse and undue interference in religious affairs.

As noted by researcher D. Kusainov, religious expertise leads to infringement of the rights of believers. His work "Religious expertise in Kazakhstan: "Jihad against literature" or prevention of extremism?" considers the problems associated with religious expertise in Kazakhstan (17).

Overall, while religious expertise can be a useful tool for regulating religious activity and combating religious extremism, its use is subject to criticism and requires more careful regulation to prevent possible human rights violations and ensure respect for the principles of the rule of law.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered to improve religious expertise and increase its effectiveness:

1. Professional development of experts: Active missionary activity, transformation of religious dogmas, emergence of new religious doctrines requires from the expert constant updating of knowledge and skills. As noted by the experts in their countries, no attention is paid to this problem. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to training and professional development of experts by conducting specialized courses and seminars on analysis of religious materials, identification of signs of extremism and legal aspects of religious expertise.

2. Digitalization of activities: Introduction of digital technologies into the processes of religious expertise will increase the speed of analysis and processing of information, as well as provide more reliable storage and protection of data. The automation of processes will also reduce the time for expert examination and increase its efficiency. Several CIS countries are working on digitalization of religious expertise, which will optimize this procedure and improve its quality. For example, the use of analyzer programs that conduct lexica-semantic

content analysis of audio, video and textual materials will significantly reduce the time to study and analyze materials.

3. International cooperation: Development of mechanisms for international cooperation in the field of religious expertise will allow for the exchange of experience, best practices and information between countries, which contributes to improving the quality and objectivity of conducted examinations. For example, in October 2021, the N. Nazarbayev Centre for the Development of Interfaith and Intercivilizational Dialogue organized an international conference "Religious expertise in the CIS: experience and modern trends". The conference participants noted its relevance and role in establishing international cooperation.

4. Standardization of procedures: The development of uniform standards and methodologies for conducting religious expertise will help ensure that it is conducted more objectively and reliably, and will improve the consistency of results between different expert groups and countries.

5. Strengthening independence: It is important to ensure that religious expertise is independent of political and ideological influences to prevent it from being used to persecute certain religious or political groups.

Implementing these recommendations would improve the quality and objectivity of religious expertise, increase its effectiveness in combating religious extremism, and ensure respect for the principles of the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is necessary to summarize the main results made in the

article on the features of religious expertise and its role in combating religious extremism in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The article reviewed the normative-legal acts regulating religious expertise in the CIS countries, as well as the main problems and aspects of its use. During the analysis of normative legal acts and practice of religious expertise application in the CIS countries it was revealed that this tool is widely used by state agencies to control religious activity and prevent the spread of extremist ideas. However, there are a number of critical points, such as the possibility of political interference, subjectivity of expert evaluation, as well as violation of human rights and lack of transparency in the process of expert examination. Despite these problems, religious expertise remains an important tool in combating religious extremism.

A number of recommendations are offered to improve religious expertise, including improving the qualifications of experts, digitalizing activities, developing international cooperation and strengthening the independence of this tool from political and ideological influences.

Overall, the article emphasizes the importance of religious expertise in countering religious extremism and calls for further study and improvement of this tool, taking into account international human rights standards and principles of the rule of law.

Acknowledgment

This research was funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Grant №AP14972866).

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