

Memorial considers Tver resident Andrei Bubeev a political prisoner

Andrei Bubeev is being held on remand in a pre-trial detention centre on charges of crimes under Article 280 Part 2 (public calls to extremist actions using the Internet) and Article 280.1 Part 2 (public calls to actions intended to violate the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation using the Internet) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. The basis for the prosecution has been the reposting of two statements sharply negative in relation to Russian policy: an article 'Crimea is Ukraine!', signed by Boris Stomakhin, and a drawing of a hand squeezing toothpaste out of a tube, with the words: 'Squeeze Russia out of yourself.'

The article 'Crimea is Ukraine!' says that the return of Crimea to Ukraine should be a unifying idea for Russians who have anti-imperial views. At the same time, the author states that the return of Crimea to Ukraine is only possible if the Russian Federation is dissolved, and considers the collapse of Russia to be inevitable. The repost of the drawing with toothpaste is accompanied by a text from an online page 'Ukrainian Attack' ['Украинский наступ'], criticizing the Russian opposition for a lack of decisiveness and indicating that the only appropriate protest slogan would be 'Russia should not exist.'

We consider the tone of these texts excessively insulting and aggressive. However, in our view this is insufficient reason for a prosecution: the texts do not contain plans for military operations, direct calls to violence, concrete proposals for destroying Russian statehood, and so on. This is also confirmed by the conclusions of the expert who considers that 'incitement is expressed in an oblique manner' (in other words, in no obvious way).

Earlier Bubeev had been sentenced to a year in a settlement-colony under Article 282 Part 1 (inciting hatred or hostility, and denigrating human dignity) for a series of pro-Ukrainian publications on VKontakte and under Article 222 Part 1 (illegal acquisition, transfer, sale, possession, transport or carrying of ammunition) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation for possessing cartridges for his hunting rifle. In the course of this first prosecution he admitted his guilt and agreed to a plea bargain since, according to his wife Anastasiya, he was misinformed by the state-appointed lawyer.

Bubeev has fully served the sentence to which he was sentenced under Article 222 (five months). Under Article 282, according to the judgment, Bubeev was convicted of denigrating the dignity of Russian military service personnel. Essentially, the conviction was based on the reposting of anonymous information about the conflict in the south-east of Ukraine and other content linked with the same subject. None of these publications contained calls to violence. It is worth pointing out in addition that the Zavolzhsky district court, evidently, does not distinguish between 'combatants of Novorossiya' and Russian military service personnel.

Memorial Human Rights Centre considers that Andrei Bubeev has been deprived of his liberty for the sole reason that he expressed an opinion, and that this is in no way proportionate to the degree of danger presented to the public by the publications, albeit not always in temperate language, of which he is accused. We demand Bubeev's release.

Recognition of a person as a political prisoner, or as a victim of a politically-motivated prosecution, does not mean that Memorial Human Rights Centre agrees with their views or statements, or approves of their statements or actions.

For more information about this case, see the website of [Memorial Human Rights Centre](#).

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