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Maximum-Security Prison to Open in Krasnodar Region This Spring

By Allison Quinn

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A maximum-security prison for terrorists and extremists is scheduled to open in Yeniseisk in the southern Krasnodar region this spring, Vladimir Shayeshnikov, head of the regional branch of the Federal Prison Service, told journalists on Tuesday.

The prison will be based on the territory of another prison that is currently located there, and will be able to hold up to 152 prisoners, Interfax reported.

All of the prison's employees will undergo special training, and "norms for maintaining the given category of criminals must be strictly adhered to," Shayeshnikov said.

"It is not much of an honor for us to have such an institution on our territory. Nevertheless, the decision was made. Prison personnel has been selected, and they've gone through training for work with such prisoners in the European part of the country. Now, we're waiting for confirmation of the institution's charter. As soon as the charter is received, the prison will

be opened."

He noted that the prison's establishment was ordered by a governmental decree.

It has been reported that the prison will house prisoners convicted of "especially severe" crimes, including terrorism and extremism.

According to Russian law, however, extremism concerns two main clauses in the Criminal Code, both of which have been heavily criticized for what some consider ambiguity: "public appeals to commit extremist acts" and "inciting hatred or antagonism and abasing human dignity."

Many say such wording is too vague and leaves the courts too much leeway in deciding what is extremist and what is not.

One example of that is Mikhail Deyev, an opposition activist who was found guilty of extremism by the Orlov region's Zavodskoi District Court in 2010 for having a political slogan — "Down with autocracy!" — printed on stickers.

Extremist charges have also been filed for videos considered to be highly offensive, for instance the "Innocence of Muslims" film released in October 2012.

It is not clear whether the new prison in Yeniseisk will house prisoners convicted of such offenses in the general population along with violent offenders, or whether measures will be taken to ensure that people convicted of extremism for non-violent crimes or the publication of material deemed to be extremist would be detained separately.

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