

Putin Introduces Bill to Prohibit Canonical Religious Texts Being Designated 'Extremist'

October 15, 2015



President Vladimir Putin has introduced a bill at the State Duma that would prohibit the canonical texts of Christianity, Islam, Judaism or Buddhism from being designated “extremist,” a news report said.

“The Bible, Quran, Tanakh and Kanjur, their content and quotations from them may not be deemed extremist materials,” the bill states, state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported Wednesday.

The bill follows an outcry by Russia's Muslim population against a ruling made by a Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk city court in August that deemed a book containing quotes and commentary on verses from the Quran “extremist” and banned it from local distribution.

The leader of Russia's republic of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, has pledged to “personally call to account” the judge and prosecutor in the Yuzhno-Sakhalin case.

A senior Russian Orthodox priest, Georgy Orekhanov, praised the latest bill, saying the texts of the canonical books, or “at least that of the Bible,” cannot be considered extremist, Ekho Moskvyy radio reported.

A Russian law on religion, adopted in the 1990s, names Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism an “inalienable part of the historical heritage” of the country. It also reaffirms a constitutional provision identifying Russia as a secular state, with no official preferential status for any religion.

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