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Terrorist Cell Leader Detained in Russia, Security Forces Say

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Anatoly Medved / TASS

Russia's security services said they have detained the leader of the Russian wing of the Hizb ut-Tahrir Islamist group, a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

The Federal Security Service (FSB), a successor-agency of the KGB, said the arrests took place in Russia's Muslim-majority republic of Tatarstan.

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"The ringleader of the international terrorist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami's Russian wing and heads of the regional bodies have been detained," the FSB said in a press statement Thursday.

It said the suspects recruited members to be sent out to the Middle East and – "at the

direction of their foreign handlers" – sought to establish a "worldwide caliphate."

Banned religious material and electronic devices were seized during the raids.

Hizb ut-Tahrir has been classified as a terrorist organization in Russia since 2003. Meanwhile, the group operates legally in a number of other countries, including Ukraine and the United States.

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