The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Chechen Court Hands 3.5-Year Jail Term to Quran-Burner

February 27, 2024



Nikita Zhuravel. **Yelena Afonina / TASS**

A court in Russia's republic of Chechnya has sentenced a young man to three-and-a-half years in prison for burning a Quran, the independent media outlet Sotavision reported Tuesday.

Nikita Zhuravel, 20, was detained in May 2023 on suspicion of publicly burning the Muslim holy book in the southern region of Volgograd.

Local authorities granted a request by Chechen law enforcement to have Zhuravel stand trial in the North Caucasus region despite concerns over human rights abuses under leader Ramzan Kadyrov's rule.

The Visaitovsky District Court in the Chechen capital of Grozny found Zhuravel guilty of offending religious believers and hooliganism on Tuesday.

Related article: Chechnya's Kadyrov Calls for 'Blood Vengeance' Against Relatives of Fugitives

The judge sided with prosecutors and handed Zhuravel a three-and-a-half-year prison sentence.

The young man had pleaded guilty to the charges of offending religious believers but denied that he sought to disturb public order.

In August, Zhuravel accused Kadyrov's son Adam, who was 15 years old at the time, of beating him in detention.

The Chechen leader later posted a video of the beating on social media, praising his son for "defending his religion."

Law enforcement authorities in Chechnya have not opened an investigation into the beating and the Kremlin has declined to comment on the video.

Russia's prominent human rights group Memorial has designated Zhuravel a political prisoner.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/02/27/chechen-court-hands-35-year-jail-term-to-quran-burner-a84256