

# Features of the Doctrinal Formulation of the Content of the Concept of Religious Extremism as a Form of Threat to Society and the State

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**Abstract.** In article the existing problem of indeterminacy of doctrinal determination of content of the concept "religious extremism" and lack of its legislative fixing is considered. Need of formulation of the considered concept is proved. The substance of this phenomenon allowing to realize features, the mechanism and methodology of its destructive influence on all spheres of life of society and state is considered. The author formulates basic elements of maintenance of a concept, the concept of its legal definition which have to form the basis of fixing of the legislative nomenclature which is a basis for law enforcement and legal protection.

## 1. Introduction

Extremism in any of its manifestations is antisocial, destructive in nature, no matter in what form it is expressed and whatever ideas are covered. Society, the state, the economy, and directly each person are a suffering subject in this undeclared and brutal war.

## 2. Pertinence and scientific merit

The relevance of the issue under consideration is dictated by the fact that extremism based on religious grounds is becoming a global problem for the Russian multiconfessional society. The well-being of the state and society, its existence, as such, may depend on the emergence and escalation of interethnic and inter-confessional conflicts. Currently, the concept of "religious extremism" has been used more and more often, and moreover, it has been mentioned among threats to national security. However, it is worth noting that the definition of "religious extremism" has not been made at the legislative level. In the doctrinal definition there is no uniformity and logically complete understanding of the general construction and content of the intensional, and the extensional of the proposed concept.

## 3. Goals and tasks of the research

The objective of this study is to recognize the essence of religious extremism in order to identify the main characterizing elements that can qualitatively determine the content of a given concept, designate the concept of definition. In the research field, we will include a semantic analysis of the concepts, forms and methods of religious extremism, the mechanism of this phenomenon and the analysis of examples of external manifestations.

As a central idea, we take the position that religion itself does not accept violence and aggression. If such manifestations are present, then this is far from a religion, but a kind of extremist movement that uses religious positions to attract new supporters, or to cover up its activities. So, for example, the use of the terms “pseudo-Islamic” or “pseudo-religious” instead of “religious extremism” proposed by the chairman of the Russian Muftis Council has the right to exist, since in this case it will avoid linking crimes with religion and insulting the feelings of believers [1].

According to other opponents of the use of this term, religious extremism in its purest form does not exist, there is only the desire of individuals to use religion to solve political issues. Supporters of this theory, opposing the concept of "religious extremism" adhere to the concept of "religious and political extremism."

#### **4. The analysis of the theoretical approaches**

We proceed directly to the study of the essence of religious extremism.

It is extremely rare, but still found in scientific literature and the media, and such use of phrases as “extremism on religious grounds,” “extremism on a religious basis,” “ethno-religious extremism,” or “extremism in religion.”

As you can see, disputes about the need to use the concept of "religious extremism" have a place to be. The only disappointing fact is that the effort and time spent on these disputes could bring much more fruit, being spent on the prevention and prevention of this negative phenomenon, no matter how it is called. Therefore, in our work we will try to most comprehensively give the concept of “religious extremism” and justify the need to consolidate the term.

Such a definition as “religious extremism” is not enshrined in law. There are only mentions in the legal acts of the signs of this phenomenon and the classification of the Strategy [2] as the most dangerous types of extremism.

To try to understand the essence of this phenomenon, we turn to the Federal Law “On Countering Extremist Activities” [3]. Clause 4 of the first part of the first article relates to extremist activities the promotion of exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of a person based on his social, racial, national, religious or linguistic affiliation, or his attitude to religion.

In turn, most scholars in their writings associate the manifestation of “religious extremism” with the activities of representatives of a religion who defend their faith using extremist methods. At the same time, the imposition by them of their religious views on all members of society is regarded by scientists as one of the basic conceptual signs of religious extremism.

It is customary to attribute to one of the main conceptual signs of religious extremism the attempts of its supporters to impose their religious views on all members of society.

But what about, for example, if an atheist, using extremist methods, will convince believers that God does not exist?

The concept of “religious extremism” as seen from a bunch of words consists of two components - extremism itself and religion.

Before continuing to talk about such a phenomenon as “religious extremism”, it is necessary to determine the content of the concepts “religion” and “religious” in order to distinguish the studied concept from other types of extremism.

The term “religion” is given many different definitions; many definitions are given. If we generalize them, we get the following.

Religion (from Latin religio - conscience, piety, holiness) is a certain system of views and a community of people united by a common belief in the supernatural, containing a specific set of moral norms and rules of conduct and having a symbol of worship and faith.

A distinctive feature of a religious worldview is a belief in the supernatural: in God, in the immortality of the soul, etc. The doctrine of all traditional religions, *ceteris paribus*, indicates that religion is the most effective and universal means of ensuring proper behavior of people, since the focus of the norm is not on the realization of its social, personal or other usefulness for a particular person and / or society, but on the formation of a stable psychological inevitability, indisputability, etc.

only one behavior approved by a particular religion.

Accordingly, "religious", in the broad sense, accepting not only established rules of behavior, but also the most important thing is the mechanism (forms and methods) of influence on the consciousness of participants in social relations (on their consciousness).

The approval of this position in Russian society can be evidenced by the Federal Law "On Amending the Federal Law" On Countering Extremist Activities ", signed by the President of the Russian Federation, according to which the Bible, the Koran, Tanah and Ganjur, their contents and quotes from them cannot be recognized as extremist materials.

We proceed directly to the concept of "religious extremism."

As in the case with the definition of the term "extremism", scientists do not have the most unified stable idea of the content of the concept of "religious extremism," which does not contribute, as already noted, to the development of specific and most effective methods of counteracting this particular type of extremism.

For example, consider the definition of religious extremism given by V V Biryukov: "Religious extremism is a religiously motivated or religiously camouflaged activity aimed at forcibly changing the state system or forcibly seizing power, violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state, and inciting religious hatred and hatred for these purposes" [4].

Let us disagree with this definition, since religious extremist activity does not always pursue the named V V Biryukov goals. The definition given by the author, in our opinion, is most consistent with the concept of "religious and political extremism."

In general, the presence of a political component in the activities of religious associations can be argued for a long time. A vivid example here is the activity of various kinds of destructive sects, in most cases the goals of the leaders of which are limited to power within the sect itself, confrontation with the traditional religion from which it separated and a trivial profit. And only if the ambitions of the leaders of the sect go beyond the bounds of the power that they possess within the framework of their sect, we can talk about the appearance of the very political component that will equate the activities of this sect with religious and political extremism. At the same time, someone may say that the confrontation with the traditional religion from which the sect separated is the very political component. But this is far from being the case (at least by the example of our state), since the Russian Federation, in accordance with the Constitution, is a secular state and, accordingly, the confrontation of religions is not political.

The examples here include the activities of a number of sects that "foresaw the end of the world" for which political activity was devoid of any meaning.

These examples are the tragic consequences of the totalitarian sect of the "Temple of the Nations," which ended in 1978 as a result of the mass suicide of his followers in Johnstown, Guyana (918 dead, including 270 children) [5], events on the Mount Carmel estate (USA, Texas), which led to its assault by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Guard in 1993, which killed 82 members of the sect, including more than 20 children, as well as 4 agents of the ATF Bureau [6] and a monstrous "act retaliation "for events at Mount Car chalk "expressed in the Terrorist Act of April 19, 1995, by Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols in Oklahoma City (USA, Texas) [7], and prior to the events of September 11, 2001, which was the largest terrorist attack in the United States.

In the cases of the "Temple of the Nations" and the "Branch of Davidova" from the Mount Carmel estate, the activities of the adherents of these sects could not be officially recognized as extremist, until the authorities intervened in it.

Speaking of destructive sects, it is worth noting the particular danger of their activities, due to its latent nature and sophisticated methods of attracting new followers and brainwashing already available. As a rule, their activities are accompanied by control over all spheres of life of their members, the use of physical and psychological violence, along with the use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs to suppress the personality, as well as the praise and deification of sect leaders, who often pursue selfish goals under the guise of religion.

Religious extremism is manifested not only in the religious environment, but also in the field of

culture, politics, and interethnic relations. Therefore, the corresponding types of extremism “religious-political”, “ethno-religious” and others appear.

The appraisal that the recognition of one’s creed as a leading one and, as a result, the suppression of other faiths by means of coercing one’s creed is the main goal of religious extremism [8]. But what about extremism manifestations that do not go beyond the confession of one confession?

To resolve the contradictions arising in the definition of “religious extremism” we consider it necessary to adhere to the opinion of I P Davydova [9], who distinguishes the following forms of religious extremism: intra-confessional (aimed at deep deformation of the confession); non-confessional (aimed at eliminating other faiths); personality-oriented (aimed at the destructive transformation of personality); ethno-religious (aimed at transforming the ethnic group); religious-political (aimed at changing the political system); social (aimed at changing the socio-economic system). His opinion is supported by scientists and practitioners [10].

Slogans, appeals, ideological actions of extremist religious organizations are addressed, as a rule, not to reason, but to people's feelings and prejudices, designed for uncritical, emotional perception, blind adherence to customs and traditions, and the effect of the crowd. And actions, sometimes extremely cruel, are aimed at spreading fear, suppressing the enemy psychologically, and causing shock in society [11].

The main methods of activity of religious extremist organizations include the following: distribution of literature, extremist video and audio tapes promoting the ideas of extremism, illegal activities under the guise of a missionary, etc. Violence, extreme cruelty and aggressiveness combined with demagoguery. Threats, blackmail and provocation are integral elements of the “argumentation” of religious and political extremists [12].

## 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, we can conclude that “religious extremism” as a legal definition does not currently exist in the form in which it is necessary for a clear understanding of the essence of this phenomenon, which undoubtedly creates certain difficulties in choosing existing and developing new methods of countering extremism in the field of public relations related to religion.

In general terms, as we understand it, religious extremism differs from other types of extremism in that its followers use existing religious teachings and symbols to motivate existing ones and attract new people to their illegal activities. At the same time, leaders are not always, if not often false in their aspirations, and by no means pursuing religious goals, they just hide behind religion to achieve their own.

In our opinion, in the broad sense of the word, based on the etymology of the words “religious” and “extremism”, “religious extremism” is a commitment in religion to extreme views and actions.

In a narrow sense, adhering to the concept of extremism set forth in the draft Convention in the framework of this work, we would like to give the following definition of religious extremism.

We will offer the author’s understanding of “religious extremism” - this is the ideology and practice of using religious norms, postulates, symbols and other paraphernalia aimed at resolving political, social, racial, national and religious conflicts by means of violent and other unconstitutional actions in support of illegal actions in the service of God.

The use of such terms as “religious-political extremism” and “religious fundamentalism”, “religious fanaticism”, “religious fundamentalism” along with “religious extremism” is justified insofar as these terms are related to “religious extremism” as general and particular, as its forms and types. The use of these terms is necessary to develop specific countermeasures applicable only for a certain type of extremism.

As such, the term “religious extremism” in the Russian Federation has not received legislative consolidation and a clear definition as a legal definition. There is only a mention, albeit of decisive importance, in the need to pay close attention to this problem of “religious extremism” as one of the most dangerous types of extremism, along with national and political types of extremism. This division was made in the Strategy for Countering Extremism in the Russian Federation until 2025 [13]

only by including the phase of "enmity on the grounds of ... religious affiliation ..." [14].

The positions indicated in the Strategy once again confirm the particular danger of the "religious state" in our multiconfessional and multinational society.

Further clarification of the forms and methods of religious extremism will only contribute to the development of new and modernization of existing measures to counter this negative phenomenon. The formation of terminology at the doctrinal level and its subsequent consolidation in regulatory legal acts will provide an opportunity for the law enforcer and law enforcement agency (public authorities) to determine this type of extremism, to fight it effectively, punishing the guilty. At the same time, clearly defining the definition, clearly and completely filling out the extensional and extensional term, a clear understanding of the nature and mechanism of the threat is given, which will become very useful not only for government bodies in qualifying an illegal act, business (economy) against whose interests it is more and more often used Terror, and to a greater extent for an ordinary person, extremism is directed against religious values and constitutional rights and freedoms.

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