

Gadzhiyev · Tambiyev · Rizvanov

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Campaign in support of political
prisoners



Abdulmumin Gadzhiyev

Journalist, "Chernovik"

16 years 10 months



Kemal Tambiev

Entrepreneur

17 years 4 months



Abubakar Rizvanov

Lawyer

17 years 10 months

Case Overview

Abdulmumin Gadzhiyev, Kemal Tambiev, and Abubakar Rizvanov were convicted under Article 205.1 of the Russian Criminal Code (financing terrorism). The prosecution's case is built on the criminalization of journalism, ordinary religious practice, and charitable fundraising. No episode demonstrates any violence, preparation for violent acts, or direct intent to finance terrorism.

Timeline

June 2019

Arrest of all three defendants; more than four years spent in pre-trial detention before the verdict.

2023

First-instance verdict: Gadzhiyev — 17 years, Tambiev — 17 years 6 months, Rizvanov — 18 years.

September 2023

Appeal filed.

April 2024

Appellate court formally reduces each sentence by 2 months — final terms shown above.

July 2026

The Supreme Court of the Russian Federation upholds the verdict. Domestic legal remedies exhausted.

Why the Case Was Fabricated

- None of the key elements were proven: connection to terrorist activity, intent, or actual "financing."
- Gadzhiyev was convicted, among other things, over two interviews he wrote in 2008 and 2013 — that is, before ISIS even existed and before the organization was designated as terrorist in Russia (2014). The prosecution held him accountable for publications that could not possibly have been linked to an organization designated as terrorist years later.
- The prosecution's key financial episode was a money transfer of 16,000 rubles. Not a single piece of evidence presented in court supported the prosecution's theory of "terrorism financing." On the contrary, the defense documented that the transfer was made to purchase airline tickets. The prosecution attempted to read out the testimony of a secret witness on which this entire episode was based — but the sealed envelope containing the witness's data turned out to be empty, and the "witness" himself had fled the country to escape persecution by security services. Despite this, the court still kept the episode in the verdict.
- The verdict relies on contradictory testimony, part of which — according to the defense — was obtained under duress and later retracted.
- Judge Rizvan Zubairov filed a dissenting opinion, explicitly stating that the court's conclusions were based on assumptions rather than verified facts.
- In 2023, Interpol removed preacher Israil Akhmednabiev (Abu Umar Sasitlinsky) — the central figure of the prosecution's theory — from its international wanted list, acknowledging that the persecution was politically and religiously motivated.
- The court systematically disregarded defense arguments and failed to resolve obvious contradictions in the case file.

Charges Against Kemal Tambiev — and Why They Fall Apart

Nº	Charge	Evidence
1	Cooperation with the Ukrainian educational foundation "Chytai" ("Read").	A documented appeal from Ukrainian citizen Elena Vladimirovna Lazinska (born in Haisyn, Vinnytsia region) confirming she received financial assistance from Kemal — direct evidence of the humanitarian, not terrorist, nature of the activity.
2	Participation in the charitable group "Mosque Construction in Simferopol."	An official decision by INTERPOL's Commission for the Control of Files (CCF) in the case of Israil Akhmednabiev: the Commission found that he ran legitimate international charitable work (the ANSAR and The Living Heart foundations — building schools, mosques, and wells in Niger and Bangladesh, participating in conferences alongside the Red Crescent), and recognized his criminal prosecution in Russia as politically and religiously motivated.
3	Association with preacher Israil Akhmednabiev, who publicly condemned Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria and Russia's	

№	Charge	Evidence
	military aggression against Ukraine.	
4	Participation in the charitable project "Khair," which provided financial assistance to people in need — including Ukrainian citizens, regardless of nationality or religion.	

Already Recognized

The case has received public attention and condemnation from leading international human rights organizations: **Amnesty International** (Gadzhiyev recognized as a prisoner of conscience), **Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**, the **Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)**, and the **Memorial Human Rights Center**, which has recognized all three as political prisoners.

Campaign Objectives

1 International Recognition as Political Prisoners

It is essential that international human rights organizations formally recognize all three as political prisoners. This elevates a regional case to the international level, opening access to foreign ministries, parliaments, and UN mechanisms, and provides protection within prison.

2 Inclusion in Political Prisoner Exchange Lists

Domestic legal remedies are exhausted — in July 2026, the Supreme Court upheld the verdict. The real path home now lies through the lists used in exchange negotiations. For a name to be included in such a list, it must first become known.

How to Help

1 Write a Letter

Send a letter of support to the prisoners — this is recorded by the administration and reduces the risk of pressure.

2 Spread the Word

Share campaign materials on social media and with journalists — visibility provides protection.

3 Contact Parliamentarians

Submit a request to foreign ministries, parliaments, or relevant UN committees asking for recognition and inclusion in exchange lists.

Full case materials, court documents, and the judge's dissenting opinion are available on the campaign website.

Sources: chernovik.net · kavkaz-uzel.eu · svoboda.org · Amnesty International · RSF · CPJ · Memorial · ECtHR · INTERPOL (CCF/124/R577.22).