



“Unauthorized” Plov in Yekaterinburg

The Muslims of Yekaterinburg have been trying for many years to obtain permission from the authorities to build the Cathedral Mosque, but so far all efforts have been unsuccessful. On July 6 this year, Muslims of the city gathered at the Nur Usman temporary mosque to perform Friday prayers and discuss this issue. The event, which was held under the auspices of the regional spiritual administration of Muslims, they called OPEN PLOV. According to the meeting coordinator, Nurzida Bengier, all concerned citizens who are interested in Islam were invited to enjoy plov and talk. As expected, there were a lot of people, about 500 people, because every fifth resident of the region is a Muslim.

The authorities from the very beginning opposed the assembly and were probably preparing for a forceful dispersal. The organizers of the event were summoned to the local prosecutor's office. Apparently, they planned to hand over the traditional “warning about the inadmissibility of extremist activity”. The representative of the Sverdlovsk Ministry of Public Security even threatened: “The organizers are obliged to submit an application ... The police and the Russian Guard are already warned. If the participants gather, the organizers will be punished in accordance with the law”.

Apparently, it was intended that Muslims would not come to the event because of the fear of falling under the rink of the Russian Guard. However, representatives of the Muslim community did not agree with this: “If people come to eat plov and want to discuss our problems, why is it forbidden? It turns out that today you can't express your position?” As a result, although the Russian Guard promised to disperse the Muslims gathered at OPEN PLOV in the temporary mosque “Nur Usman,” but the Muslims did not give up their idea, the security forces could not do anything and stop the believers. Even in Moscow, everyone sees when, on Islamic holidays, believers gathered in huge crowds on the street for prayer, nobody touched them. The authorities of Yekaterinburg probably did not take this step in order not to attract the attention of the whole public to this problem, but they were reinsured by driving the police, i.e. they had the prudence not to interfere in what was happening.

What is the problem, why don't the authorities allow the building of a cathedral mosque in Yekaterinburg? The answer lies in an important pillar of Russia's domestic policy regarding Muslims in non-Muslim regions. Thousands of people will go to large mosques in large cities, and as a result, sooner or later, a religious revival torpedoes, unfortunately, among already quite assimilated Muslims. Moreover, the so-called “traditional”, diluted-cut off by censorship to purely spiritual and priest Islam will not be reborn, but real, giving solutions for the real life of society Islam. Thus, the war in Russia has now been declared not only to uncontrolled religious organizations, but even to official spiritual administrations.

But in general, the following picture arises: as Islam spread, not only the number of Muslims grew, but also their quality. That is, the number of those who understand Islam not just as a set of priestly rituals and morality grew. Not only did the real threat of Islamization arise, but the correct understanding of Islam as a real system for life spread. At that time, the authorities gave the so-called green light to “traditional” or

"moderate Islam," in every way promoting it through official clergy (DUMs), or at least not interfering with it. At the same time, the authorities split the Ummah, dividing them into "moderate" and "radicals," and used the "moderate" against "radicals." Then, in those regions where the so-called "radicals" were eliminated (killed, imprisoned, immigrated), which means that the "traditional" ceased to be "necessary", the authorities began to squeeze slowly out the "traditional" too. And it would be naive to assume that the authorities will stop there, because Allah (swt) in the Quran warned us about this: ﴿وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ﴾ **“And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion”** [2:120].

Then, the authorities were afraid that by spreading "traditional Islam", they contribute to the "traditional" Muslims then, in any case, sooner or later, as they study Islam, to become so-called "radical". Realizing this, they chose the tactics of suppressing any manifestation of Islam wherever possible with the impunity for the authorities. In Muslim regions, where the main population traditionally professes Islam, in such as Chechnya and Dagestan, Bashkiria and Tatarstan, authorities do this more carefully. An example of this is the struggle with the hijab. By banning it at the level of legislation by the decision of the Stavropol Regional Court of 22.03.2013, the authorities ran into the total disregard by Muslims of this ban of the authorities, various protests and disobedience, and the consolidation of Muslims in defense of the hijab. As a result, the authorities yielded to the perseverance of Muslims and introduced a "moratorium" on the effect of this court decision to ban hijabs. Here, the authorities used the official clergy in the person of the DUMs to declare this "moratorium" to reassure Muslims and try to raise the lost authority of the clergy. Although, at the same time, the authorities monitor the state of Muslims in this matter with periodic targeted attempts to ban the wearing of the hijab in certain schools and universities, leaving no attempts to ban the hijab. And only the reaction of the people does not give them the opportunity to ban finally the hijab by applying a court decision to ban it in practice.

As for other regions where Muslims are in the minority, such as the Sverdlovsk Region, Omsk Region, Kaliningrad, here the authorities can afford to suppress any manifestations of Islam by destroying mosques, for example, as it was in Kaliningrad on 31 May 2019, as a ban on hijabs in schools and universities, or as a current example with an attempt to ban the distribution of plov and a ban on the construction of a cathedral mosque in Yekaterinburg, and even if the initiative comes from the official clergy.

Allah (swt) in the Quran says:

﴿يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَن يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

“They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses except to perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it” [at-Taubah 9:32].

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahriir by
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