

Terror Suspects Detained in St. Petersburg

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ST. PETERSBURG — Two suspected members of the pan-Islamic political organization Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (Islamic Party of Liberation) have been detained in St. Petersburg in a joint effort by the FSB and the police of the St. Petersburg and Leningrad region, news site Fontanka.ru reported Thursday.

The detainees were described as alleged leaders of terrorist cells in the report, which cited a statement made by the regional branch of the Federal Security Service (FSB) Thursday morning.

Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami, popular in Russia's Central Asian neighbors Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, has been listed as a terrorist organization and banned in Russia following a Supreme Court ruling in 2003. The organization calls for the unification of Islamic nations under a single Islamic state and is recognized as a terrorist group by a minority of countries, including Russia and Kazakhstan. Neither the United States nor the European Union have recognized it as such.

A case has been opened against the detainees.

The organization has been particularly visible in the republic of Tatarstan and in May 2014 a criminal investigation was launched in relation to the emergence of Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami terrorist cells in the Leningrad region.

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