

RUSSIA RELIGION NEWS

Russian parliament preparing restrictions on new religious groups

WORKING GROUP FOR COMBATING SECTARIANISM TO BE CREATED IN STATE DUMA
[RIA Novosti, 25 February 2016](#)

Deputies of the State Duma on Thursday at a session of the interfractional deputies' Group for Protection of Christian Values made a decision to create a working group for combating sectarianism in Russia, a report from the press service of the coordinator of the interfractional group, Sergei Gavrilov, says.

Mikhail Markelov, a deputy from United Russia and a member of the interfractional group, noted in the session that at the present time sects are expanding their presence in various constituent elements (subjects) of Russia, and more and more new converts of these organizations are appearing.

At the same time the legislation lacks a definition of "sect," and introduction of such a term and special law has both supporters and opponents. Markelov noted that "critics of the appearance of such a law appeal to the fact that there is no Supreme Court determination, and because of this it is impossible to adopt one." He said that because of the lack of such a definition, developers of a legislative idea against sects have often entered a dead end.

"I have a suggestion to create a working group of members of our deputies' group and those deputies who already have introduced their own legislative initiatives intended to combat sects," Markelov noted at the session. Coordinators approved the creation of such a working group.

"All of this is correct, but we need to work not only in the direction of developing a methodology for law enforcement agencies for identification and prevention of destructive sects that are connected not only with citizens' property interests, but we need to begin discussion of issues involving the manipulation of mass consciousness, including propaganda for anti-Russian activity," Gavrilov needed.

"We recall the dangerous role played by sects in the revolution in Ukraine and the activity that they conducted for suppression of Orthodox interests in Ukraine now. I would hope that Mikhail Yurevich Markelov would head this group and we will provide him comprehensive support," the legislator also emphasized. (tr. by PDS, posted 26 February 2016)

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