

RELIGION IN SOCIETY

**SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS OF
RELIGIOUS-POLITICAL EXTREMISM
IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS:
HOW IT EMERGED AND HOW TO OPPOSE IT**

Gulnara GAJIMURADOVA

*Ph.D. (Philos.),
Senior Research Associate,
Center for Social Demography,
Institute of Socio-Political Research,
Russian Academy of Sciences
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Valentina DOBROKHLEB

*D.Sc. (Econ.),
Professor, Chief Research Associate,
Institute of Social and Economic Problems of Population,
Russian Academy of Sciences
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Vadim BEZVERBNIY

*Ph.D. (Econ.), Leading Research Associate,
Center for Social Demography,
Institute of Socio-Political Research,
Russian Academy of Sciences
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Marina KHRAMOVA

*Ph.D. (Econ.), Leading Research Associate,
Center for Social Demography,
Institute of Socio-Political Research,
Russian Academy of Sciences
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

ABSTRACT

The authors compare and analyze the social, political and religious situation in the Central Asian countries and the predominantly Muslim regions of the Caucasus. They study the factors that contribute to the emergence of religious and political extremism in these areas; trace down the connection between religious extremism in the Northern Caucasus and Central Asia and terrorism on the global scale; generalize information about terrorist organizations, operating in Central Asia and the Caucasus, obtained from open sources; identify the social, demographic, ethnic and political factors that make religious and political extremists out of local Muslims, the methods used by transnational terrorism to catch migrants

and young people into their nets. The authors specify the relevant terms, relying on what experts in religious studies and Islam have to say about extremism and terrorism, including Islamic terrorism; reveal the internal contradictions in Islam and discuss different or even contradictory understanding and interpretations of different Islamic trends.

They outline the ways and means, used to oppose religious and political extremism in Central Asia and the Caucasus, in order to identify recruiters and prevent terrorist attacks, and arrive at the conclusion that the world community should fight the threats of religious and political extremism and terrorism together.

KEYWORDS: *religious and political extremism, terrorism, Daesh, recruitment, Wahhabism, radical Islam, the Hanafi tradition of Sunni Islam.*

Introduction

For decades, the academic community has been studying the problem of extremism and terrorism, the fact amply confirmed by an impressive number of relevant publications. The last years of the 20th and the first years of the 21st century saw a revival of religious feelings in Russia and across the post-Soviet space. The revived interest in traditional¹ Islam served as the background for the Islamic vector of religious and political extremism; its scope and influence on big population groups make it much more impressive than other types of extremism known today. One can agree with Paul

¹ The term is used mainly by Russian experts in religious studies.

Ricœur who wrote in his *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* that misinterpreted, “any monotheistic religion may trigger violent expansion and suppression of those who think differently.”²

Political scientist Rashid Emirov is convinced that Islam, as any other religion, for that matter, comes to the fore at the turning points of history of any country or nation. In fact, history has taught us that in times of troubles religion might become radicalized or assume extremist forms.³ Mukhtar Iakhiaev is of the same opinion: “Religious extremism is revived in times of transition; it is caused by the crisis of traditional religions and the emergence of new religious forms.”⁴ Erich Soloviev has written that Islamic ideological extremism became a revolutionary ideology that not merely declared that the “Crusaders,” Jews and their retinue (the local secular rulers) should be evicted, but strives to re-divide the world in favor of the Islamic ummah.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, and the ideology of communism and internationalism along with it, deprived the polyethnic communities, in which Islam was tacitly accepted as an identity marker, of a powerful regulatory instrument of national and confessional relationships. The ideological vacuum was filled with Islamic ideology that never distinguished people by ethnic affiliation and that, as many believed, could play a unifying role in the regions, replete with Muslims. Inspired by what was called “the parade of sovereignties” in the parlance of the 1990s, these trends intensified in the post-Soviet republics with the predominantly Muslim populations (in the republics of Central Asia, Azerbaijan, etc.).

The ideological doctrine of Islam makes Islamic extremism and terrorism, as its consequence, highly dangerous for any society. The phenomenon of international terrorism is directly related to religious globalization and its effects, the mounting internationalization of religious extremism related to Islam in particular. Erik Soloviev has written in this respect: “Terrorist organizations have more or less easily adjusted themselves to the changing world, its porous borders and diluted territorial sovereignties. They have already mastered new organizational skills and methods; have mastered the rapidly developing communication and information technologies, which allowed them to gather a lot of influence.”⁵

Methods and Materials

Islamist religious and political extremism can be described as a religious and political phenomenon that opposes the state by utilizing illegal methods, based on the idea of the Caliphate.

Today, Russia, along with Western Europe and the Near East, is especially vulnerable to terrorist activities of Islamist groups. In Russia, the terrorist threat is most real in the republics of the Northern Caucasus, where an undeclared war is in full swing: the regime of counterterrorist operation is declared from time to time in the republics, where fighters are hunted down and liquidated in the course of special operations. Today, the level of terrorist threat in these republics is the same as in Iraq, Syria and Libya, yet as distinct from these countries, where the common people are the main target, in the North Caucasian republics, terrorists focus on officials of all levels, policemen, businessmen and the clergy, the common people being not an exception.

² P. Ricœur, *Konflikt interpretatsiy*, Akademicheskii proekt, Moscow, 2008, pp. 121-186 (see also: P. Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1974).

³ See: *Prioritety natsionalnoy bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii na Severnom Kavkaze*, Moscow, 2011, pp. 86-106.

⁴ M.Ia. Iakhiaev, “K voprosu ob ekstremizme v Islame,” *Islamovedenie*, No. 2, 2015, pp. 64-76.

⁵ E. Soloviev, “Setevye organizatsii transnatsionalnogo terrorizma,” *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy*, No. 2 (5), Vol. 2, May-August 2004, pp. 71-83.

On 19 April, 2017, speaking at a meeting in Astrakhan, Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary of the RF Security Council, said: “Thousands of men from the Northern Caucasus fight today in Iraq and Syria in the terrorist ranks. Those, who cooperate with the international terrorist organizations, are especially dangerous. According to the available information, there are nearly 2.7 thousand people from the Caucasian Federal District, fighting in Syria and Iraq.” He added that this was the result of the terrorist and extremist propaganda in the Northern Caucasus, that the terrorist threat and tensions in the Northern Caucasus region were high.⁶

K. Khanbabaev has written that radical Islam is spreading across the region due to the social and economic crisis that negatively affected the living standards of the local people; the ideological, spiritual and moral crisis; national tension; criminalization of everyday life, caused by the widespread corruption in the corridors of power; the corrupt officials, who are not punished and remain indifferent to the highly negative context in their republics; the geopolitical transformations in the region, and the very low level of authority of the clergy and the leaders of the republics.⁷

In his Ph.D. thesis, Denis Voiakovskiy has pointed to a specific feature of North Caucasian extremism and terrorism: the ideology of radical Islam has become a part of religious, ethnic and criminal terrorism, supported by similar international structures, which means that the North Caucasian extremism and terrorism, tagged as “Islamic,” are, in fact, quasi-Islamic.⁸

Today, seen against the background of the social and political problems of the Arab states and Afghanistan, radical Islam looks like the global threat of the twenty-first century. In Central Asia, it fills the ideological and political void, adds to the regional tension and has given rise to two religious extremist groups—Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Turkestan. The roots of religious extremism were identical in both regions: corruption at all levels of power, low and dropping living standards of the common people, power abuses and incompetency of regional leaders. At all times, the political role of Islam in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan was less important than in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, closely connected geographically and mentally with Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Today, the latter two are the main source of religious extremism and terrorism in Central Asia; suicide bombers and terrorists are trained in the camps, scattered across their territories.

In the 1990s, Saudi, Turkish, Egyptian and Pakistani emissaries poured into Central Asia and the Northern Caucasus, earlier separated by the “iron curtain,” to draw young men into their religious schools and universities and to plant interpretations of Islam very different from the traditional Sunni Islam, practiced in the regions for centuries. In the Northern Caucasus, these extremist teachings and their followers concentrated in Chechnia, Daghestan and Ingushetia; in Central Asia, they found fertile soil in the Ferghana Valley, with its traditionally highly religious population, numerous mosques and a great attention to religious rites. Divided between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the valley was the center of political struggle in the best of times. The majority of local people live by the Shari‘a Law and are convinced that social problems can and should be settled through Islam: there is no chance to obtain one’s political rights through democratic institutions.⁹

Today, the Central Asian countries are ready for Islamization. Kazakhstan, with its high level of labor migration from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, in which the positions of Islamism are especially strong, has come dangerously close to radicalization of Islam. In Tajikistan, Islamic forces

⁶ [https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2265169.html], 28 April, 2017.

⁷ See: K.M. Khanbabaev, “Religiozno-politicheskiy ekstremizm na Severnom Kavkaze: obshchee i osobennoe,” *Islamovedenie*, No. 2, 2010, p. 80.

⁸ See: D.S. Voiakovskiy, “Politicheskie proekty islamskogo ekstremizma v sovremennoy Rossii,” Author’s abstract of Ph.D. thesis, 2009, available at [http://www.dissertat.com/content/politicheskie-proekty-islamskogo-ekstremizma-v-sovremennoi-rossii#ixzz4fUMWNGA7], 28 April, 2017.

⁹ See: R. Toksonaliev, “Radikalnye techeniya islama v stranakh Tsentralnoy Azii,” available at [http://easttime.ru/analytics/tsentralnaya-aziya/radikalnye-techeniya-islama-v-stranakh-tsentralnoi-azii/5312], 28 April, 2017.

caused a civil war; today the religious situation is far from simple; due to the unfavorable social and political context, the radical ideas are spreading across the republic very quickly. The situation in Kyrgyzstan is similar: today, radical religious organizations have become much more active and much more attractive for Muslims and people of other faiths. Ramakant Triverdi has suggested that “today Islamization is either a geopolitical instrument or a form of anti-modernization or a result of political incompetence and economic inefficiency.”¹⁰ In his opinion, in Central Asia all these negative factors are present.

Certain parties and groups in Central Asia are connected with Islam or Islamist structures, based in other countries: Islom Loshkarlari (The Warriors of Islam), Hizb ut-Tahrir (The Islamic Liberation Party), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Tabligi Jamaat, and others. Sergei Krivosheev, the veteran of the security structures, has pointed to Hizb ut-Tahrir as the most active among the terrorist organizations, operating in Central Asia and in Russia. It trains its fighters in Pakistan and dispatches them to Iraq and Syria to fight in the ISIS ranks (the organization banned in the RF). The failures of the IS (banned in Russia) in Syria forced Hizb ut-Tahrir to bring home (to Russia among other places) many of its fighters, where they recruit new supporters and organize terrorist acts.¹¹

Despite the fact that the religious extremists in the Northern Caucasus and Central Asia are not closely connected, they are very negative about the traditional Islam, practiced there for centuries. They insist that it should be replaced with their own interpretation of a correct Islam, based on “pure” Islam, without later additions and deviations, and also on a political system based on the idea of Caliphate and a legal system based on the Shari‘a Law (the Islamic code of laws).

In line with the Hanafi tradition of Sunni Islam that respects personal freedoms of each and every individual, Islam in the Northern Caucasus and Central Asia was a peaceful religion that respected all other religions. Wahhabism, secretly promoted in the regions since the late 1970s, gradually undermined the Hanafi principles. It is wrong to think that the radical religious teachings appeared in Central Asia in post-Soviet times. According to Evgeni Egorov,¹² radically minded mullahs had been spreading their non-traditional ideas through Islamist networks when the Soviet Union was still alive and acquired even better chances in the form of well-organized extremist structures and trends, fighting state structures and regimes in the newly independent states.

Results

In 2016, a Single List of Organizations, including foreign and international structures, recognized as terrorist under the laws of the Russian Federation and engaged in clandestine activities in Russia, was published.¹³

The doctrines of radicalism, interpreted not merely as Islamic but as the only correct, play an important, or even central, role in the ideology of contemporary radicalism. Their very specific practice, up to and including suicide terrorist acts, is adjusted to these pseudo-Islamic concepts. The extremist wing consists of organizations, groups and leaders, who rely on armed struggle (terrorism being one of the methods) to achieve their aims. This brings us back to the catastrophic events of the summer of 2016: the terrorist acts in a mall in Munich that killed 9 and wounded 21, a suicide bombing in Ansbach (Germany), the terrorist act in Nice (France) that killed no less than 80, the terrorist

¹⁰ R. Triverdi, “Netraditsionnye ugrozy bezopasnosti v Tsentralnoy Azii s tochki zreniia sravnitelnoy regionalnoy perspektivy,” *Sravnitelnaia politika*, No. 4, 2011, p. 112.

¹¹ [https://ria.ru/radio_brief/20170419/1492592758.html], 28 April, 2017.

¹² See: E.N Egorov, “Islamskiy radikalizm v Tsentralnoy Azii: ‘Hizb ut-Tahrir’ i Islamskoe dvizhenie Uzbekistana,” *Srednerusskiy vestnik obshchestvennykh nauk*, No. 3 (33), 2014, p. 189.

¹³ [http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/npd/terror.htm], 28 April, 2017.

act in the St. Petersburg underground (Russia) on 3 April, 2017 that killed 14.¹⁴ The number of terrorist acts all over the world is on the rise. The so-called Islamic State (IS or Daesh, an organization banned in Russia) claims responsibility for the majority of terrorist acts. One cannot but wonder: Who are these people and how do they get involved in this and similar organizations?

Table 1

Organizations Recognized as Terrorist in the Russian Federation

No.	Name of the Organization	The Decision to Recognize the Organization as Terrorist and its Inclusion into the Single Federal List of Organizations, Recognized as Terrorist (as of 25 October, 2016)
1	The Supreme Military Majlisul Shura of the United Forces of Mojahedin of the Caucasus	Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 14.02.2003 No. GKPI 03 116, enacted on 04.03.2003
2	The Congress of the Peoples of Ichkeria and Daghestan	Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 14.02.2003 No. GKPI 03 116, enacted on 04.03.2003
3	Muslim Brotherhood (Al-Ihvan al-Muslimun)	Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 14.02.2003 No. GKPI 03 116, enacted on 04.03.2003
4	The Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami)	Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 14.02.2003 No. GKPI 03 116, enacted on 04.03.2003
5	Lashkar-e-Taiba	Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 14.02.2003 No. GKPI 03 116, enacted on 04.03.2003
6	Islamic Party of Turkestan (former Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan)	Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 14.02.2003 No. GKPI 03 116, enacted on 04.03.2003
7	Imarat Kavkaz (Caucasian Emirate)	Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 08.02.2010 No. GKPI 09-1715, enacted on 24.02.2010
8	Islamic State (other names: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham)	Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 29.12.2014 No. AKPI 14-1424C, enacted on 13.02.2015
9	Jabhat al-Nusra (Victory Front) (other names: Jabhat Fatah al-Sham or The Front of Support of Great Syria)	Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 29.12.2014 No. AKPI 14-1424C, enacted on 13.02.2015

Discussion

In 2015, the Russian special services identified about 3 thousand people across the country, suspected of fighting in the terrorist ranks in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq. This figure was quoted by

¹⁴ See: G.I. Gadjimuradova, "Protivodeystvie religioznomu ekstremizmu v svete migratsionnykh protsessov (na primere migratsionnogo krizisa v Germanii)," in: *Migratsionnye protsessy: problemy adaptatsii i integratsii migrantov: Materialy mezhdunarodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii*, ed. by Prof. V.S. Belozero, SKFU Press, Stavropol, 2016, pp. 74-78.

the Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB) of Russia, Alexander Bortnikov, at a meeting of the heads of special services and law enforcement structures from 63 countries,¹⁵ held in St. Petersburg. Citizens of some 80 countries, including those which belong to the SCO and also France, the U.K., Germany, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the U.S. and Canada fight on the side of terrorists. Religious extremism is actively promoted. Speaking at the summit of the CSTO on 15 September, 2015, its Secretary General Nikolai Bordiuzha, noted that within Operation Proxi, the CSTO had identified over 57 thousand sites, used to lure Central Asians into the Islamic State and other extremist organizations.

In fact, terrorist organizations have created an extremely efficient transnational network; the total number of agitators and recruiters of Daesh, scattered all over the world, is about 90 thousand. Agitation is carried out in 24 languages, Russian coming third after Arabic and English. According to special services, there are from 7.5 to 10 thousand Daesh recruiters operating in Russia.¹⁶ The average age of the target group (which includes Central Asian labor migrants working in Russia¹⁷) is from 14 to 28. They operate through social networks, *Telegram* with about 100 million users being the most popular of them; it is especially popular in the Arab countries and Russia, where it was invented. Jihadists use it with increasing frequency for the purposes of propaganda and agitation. According to experts in information security, it is selected because of its highly reliable system of coding.

In an interview to *Parlamentskaia gazeta*,¹⁸ Sergei Goncharov, President of the International Association of the veterans of Directorate “Alpha” of the FSB Special Purpose Center (an antiterrorist structure), revealed the details. There are groups that identify through the Internet young men, who exhibited their interest in Islam: they register as their friends in open social nets (Facebook, Instagram, etc.). Another group of “experts” specializes in brainwashing boys and girls in social networks, in order to persuade them to become fully involved. Recruiters join the game at the final stage: they are past masters of individual approaches. Girls are attracted by the prospect of marrying a strong, good-looking, charismatic and non-drinking into the bargain Muslim warrior. Boys are tempted by the prospect of wealth or the chance to become a hero. Young people are attracted by sacrificial heroism, in which individual lives are not valued. Varvara Karaulova, who made two attempts to join “the fighters of Allah” and was returned to Russia through the efforts of her parents and special services, is one of the examples.

Today, special services detain more and more Central Asian migrants, suspected of recruiting young men for military actions in Syria in the ranks of Daesh or of organizing terrorist acts in Russian cities. An Internet program, Laplace’s Demon, created in 2015, to monitor and analyze extremist groups on Facebook, VKontakte, Live Journal and Twitter, is actively used to identify recruiters of the IS with good results: on 15 December, 2016, in the course of a special operation on the outskirts of Samara, the FSB arrested two citizens of one of the Central Asian republics, suspected of close cooperation with the Islamic State.¹⁹ On 22 December, 2016, seven members of the Tabligi Jamaat religious group were detained in the Moscow Region; searches produced extremist literature, means of communication and electronic devices that contained information about the group’s activities.²⁰ The terrorist organization, the Islamic State, assumed responsibility for the attack on a policemen in Nizhniy Novgorod on 26 October, 2016. According to the information supplied by the FSB for the

¹⁵ See: I. Egorov, “Smertniki na eksport,” *Rossiyskaia gazeta*, No. 165, 28 July, 2016.

¹⁶ See: *Parlamentskaia gazeta*, 23-29 October, 2015, p. 38.

¹⁷ See: S. Ryazantsev, I. Bogdanov, V. Dobrokhleb, A. Lukyanets, “Migration from Central Asian Countries to Russia and Kazakhstan in the Context of Integration Processes in the Eurasian Economic Union Format,” *Central Asia and Caucasus*, Vol. 18, Issue 1, 2017, pp. 39-49.

¹⁸ See: *Parlamentskaia gazeta*, 23-29 October, 2015, p. 38.

¹⁹ [<https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3171371>], 26 April, 2017.

²⁰ [<https://ria.ru/incidents/20161222/1484353734.html>], 28 April, 2017.

Nizhniy Novgorod Region, the attack was carried out by people from Central Asia.²¹ According to the Central Investigatory Committee, Akbarjon Jalilov,²² another citizen of Russia, born in Kyrgyzstan, was responsible for the explosion in the St. Petersburg underground on 3 April, 2017. On 27 April, 2017, in Kaliningrad, 12 people from Central Asia were detained in the course of a special operation; it turned out that they belonged to the Islamic Jihad-Jamaat of Mojahedin international terrorist organization, banned in Russia, and probably functioned as recruiters for an international terrorist organization.²³

Regrettably, the strongest players on the international scene are not prepared to close ranks with Russia in the face of international terrorism. The United States and Great Britain that had their share of terrorist attacks, today support organizations of dubious reputation, seeking their own purely mercantilist aims. This was amply confirmed by 59 cruise missiles fired at the Shayrat Airbase, used by the Syrian government forces, on 7 April, 2017 on an order of President Trump. The same fully applies to the cancelled visit to Russia by U.K. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, sanctions against Russia and other unfriendly or even provocative acts. The world community should stand up to the terrorist threat together; the financial flows to terrorist groups should be stemmed. This is easier said than done because transnational monetary flows are hard to follow in the absence of coordinated efforts at the level of interstate cooperation of the members of counterterrorist coalition.

Conclusion

The tag “Islamic” can no longer be detached from the concepts of extremism and terrorism. The so-called Islamic extremism has already planted a negative image of Islam in people’s minds. The bloodthirsty Muslim fanatics involved in terrorist acts all over the world created an image of Islam as a violent and cruel religion guilty of murders and destruction. The term “Islamic extremism” is not quite correct: “In fact, we are talking about extremism that has selected Islam as its religious ideology.” At the same time, “Islam as a homogenous religion cannot be detached from politics. It has penetrated all forms of social consciousness, which means that from this point of view extremism can be Islamic.”²⁴

Leonid Sjukijainen, an expert in Islam and Islamic studies, has pointed out that “the positive ideological potential of Islam” should be tapped to the full in the struggle against Islamic extremism. He has recommended “to transform the Muslim legal theory from an instrument of ideological mobilization into an ally of the state and to spearhead Islam against extremists.” He has also suggested that in the Islamic regions of Russia “individual achievements of the Muslim legal culture should be used to develop law and order in Russia according to the laws of Russia and the Russian Constitution and in full accordance with the principles of acting laws to strengthen the state and make the Muslim community more responsive to its policy.”²⁵ In his article “Islamskiy ekstremizm i Rossia” (Islamic Extremism and Russia) Alexander Katz suggests that Islam should be reformed through its “pacification,” which means that Islam has certain extremist traits: “We should reform Islam by removing from the Quran the calls to liquidate the unfaithful. This should be done by peaceful Muslims at their

²¹ [<http://morning-news.ru/2016/10/islamskoe-gosudarstvo-proyavilos-v-nizhnem-novgorode/>], 28 April, 2017.

²² [<http://tass.ru/proisshestiya/4195732>], 28 April, 2017.

²³ See: “V Kaliningrade zaderzhali chlenov terroristicheskoy gruppirovki,” available at [<https://rg.ru/2017/04/27/v-kaliningrade-zaderzhali-12-chlenov-terroristicheskoy-gruppirovki.html>], 28 April, 2017.

²⁴ M.A. Bagliev, “Politicheskie aspekty sovremennogo islamskogo ekstremizma (na primere Egipta),” available at [http://planetadisser.com/see/dis_154460.html], 28 April, 2017.

²⁵ L.R. Sjukijainen, “O pravovykh sredstvakh borby s islamskim ekstremizmom i osnovnykh napravleniyakh gosudarstvennoy politiki v otnoshenii islama,” available at [http://www.gumer.info/bogoslov_Buks/Islam/syk/prav_sred.php], 28 April, 2017.

worldwide congress. If this does not happen, the boomerang will hit those of the Islamic countries that generate terrorism, trains and finance fighters.”²⁶

Sjukijainen and Khanbabaev are convinced that extremism under Islamic slogans is still alive not only because of the multitude of political, social, economic and national problems but thanks to its ideological basis oriented to the Islamic conception. So far, in Russia, people in power have not paid enough attention to the ideological and theoretical side of Islam. “As a result the Islamist conceptions are exploited by separatists, extremists and terrorists rather than by the Russian state. It is impossible to defuse the influence of Islamic radicals without including the positive ideological potential of Islam in the arsenal of state methods of antiterrorist struggle.”²⁷ All SCO members need political stability in the region, which means that they should coordinate their actions in order to identify the channels of recruitment, funding and illegal actions of radical extremists.

²⁶ A.S. Katz, “Islamskiy ekstremizm i Rossia,” available at [http://samlib.ru/k/kac_a_s/islam.shtml], 28 April, 2017.

²⁷ L.R. Sjukijainen, “Musulmanskoe pravo i borba s mezhdunarodnym terrorizmom,” *Pravo i bezopasnost*, No. 3 (16), 2005, pp. 42-51; K.M. Khanbabaev, “Ideologicheskoe protivodeistvie ekstremizmu i terrorizmu v Rossii,” *Islamovedenie*, No. 2, 2011, p. 15.