[RU] New Rules for Fighting Terrorism

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On 26 February 2006 the State Duma adopted, the legislation that on 6 March 2006 President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation signed into law the Federal Statute “On Counteraction to Terrorism”. Most of its provisions have come into legal force after official publication. The Statute derogated most of the provisions of the Statute “On Fight against Terrorism” (of 25 July 1998) to be abolished completely on 1 January 2007.

The Statute provides for the principles of counteraction to terrorism, organizational and legal measures aiming at prevention and fighting against terrorism, and minimization or elimination of the aftermath of terrorist activities. It also stipulates legal rules of conduct of antiterrorist operations including the formation and competence of operational matters, admissible limitations of the rights and freedoms inside the territory of zone of counterterrorist operation, rules of use of the Armed Forces. The Statute includes a few provisions that affect the mass media.

The new law expands the boundaries of the notion of “terrorist activities”: it shall *inter alia* include propaganda of ideas of terrorism, dissemination of information calling for performance of terrorist activities as well as proving or justifying the necessity of such performance (Article 3.2). However, the law does not introduce liability for these kinds of activities.

Unlike previous law the Statute shall not include a general definition of a counterterrorist operation zone, however in case of start of such an operation the head of operational matters shall be obliged to define a zone of operation (name concrete objects to be included in the territory of such a zone if there are any) and immediately publish this information (Article 11.2, Article 13.2). Inside the zone the following limitations of information rights may by introduced: control over any forms of conveyance of information including communication via telecommunication networks; temporary suspension of provision of telecommunication services, e.g. mobile telephone communications (Article 11.3).

As distinct from the 1998 Act, the Statute does not include any limitations upon broadcasting by the mass media on the activities of professionals involved in life-saving operations. Neither included were any provisions authorizing the head of operational matters to define the rules of access and conduct of journalists in the

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counter-terrorist operation zone. The said legal norms were excluded from the original draft law after the first reading in the Duma.Deputiesargued that this decision was justified as deriving from the controversial character of the issue in question. From now on the mass media activities in the situation of terrorist crisis shall be referred to the general provisions of the Statute on Mass Media and the self regulation rules (first of all, provisions of the Antiterrorist Convention adopted on8 April 2003 by the Mass Media Industrial Committee).

The only provision that shall directly affect the mass media authorizes the head of counterterrorist operation to appoint a member of operational matters to be responsible for contact with the mass media and the public (Article 13.2.5).

Federalnyi Zakon #35-FZ, " O protivodeistvii terrorizmu ", 06/03/2006, Rossiiskaya gazeta 10/03/2006

http://www.medialaw.ru/laws/russian_laws/txt/26.htm

Federal Statute of 6 March 2006, #35-FZ, "On Counteraction Terrorism", official daily of 10 March 2006

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