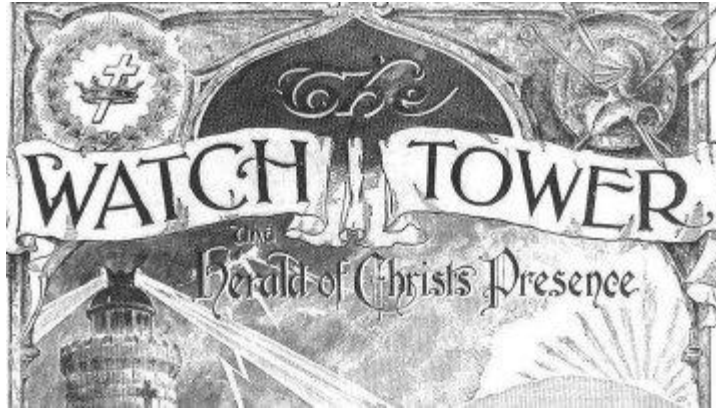


РАПСИ

РОССИЙСКОЕ АГЕНТСТВО
ПРАВОВОЙ И СУДЕБНОЙ
ИНФОРМАЦИИSection: **News**

Appeal in Jehovah's Witnesses magazines ban dispute to be heard on May 22



http://rapsinews.com/judicial_news/20120412/262783420.html

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MOSCOW, April 12 - RAPSИ. [The Moscow District Federal Commercial Court](#) will hear on May 22 a cassation appeal against the ban on the distribution of the Awake! and Watchtower magazines, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, in Russia.

In February, the [Ninth Commercial Court of Appeals](#) upheld the ban imposed by the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media. The court dismissed the appeal filed by Wachturm Bibel - und Traktat-Gesellschaft, Deutscher Zweig, e.V, the license holder, and the Jehovah's Witnesses administrative center responsible for the magazines distribution.

On April 6, 2010, the watchdog revoked the magazines distribution license, issued by the State Committee for the Press in 1997. The reason was that the Russian courts declared some of their stories extremist.

The claimants had earlier rejected watchdog's orders for being unlawful, because press publication and distribution are its core economic activities and its rights had been violated by the controversial orders.

The claimants also noted that the ban should be considered a "kind of censorship" and may only be imposed by a court.

The service argued that the organization conducts its activities outside Russia

and is not subject to Russian law.

Jehovah's Witnesses is an international religious organization. Many traditional religions consider it to be a pseudo-Christian sect. Its management center in Russia is in St. Petersburg. Its activities are forbidden in China, North Korea, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and a number of other countries. According to the organization, its membership amounted to seven million people as of August 2009.

In June 2010, the European Court of Human Rights declared illegal the Russian court's decision to dissolve the religious community of Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow and ordered Russia to pay 70,000 euros in compensation to the aggrieved party.

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