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Jehovah's Witnesses congress banned in Urals

Chelyabinsk, July 18, Interfax - Officials have not allowed *Jehovah's Witnesses* followers in the Chelyabinsk region to hold a pan-Urals congress in the Krasnoarmeisk District, citing security reasons, the regional police said in a statement on Wednesday.

On July 9, representative of the *Jehovah's Witnesses* Center in Russia Pavel Popov informed the district administration about plans to hold an interregional congress, the statement says.

"The congress was to be held in the village of Petrovka on July 20 to August 5 with about 2,000 followers from the entire Urals Federal District participating," the statement says.

Given the scope of the event, a commission of local officials, police and representatives of emergencies and other oversight services, was set up to assess the venue.

"The work done uncovered that citizens' security could not be guaranteed for a host of reasons, including the absence of elementary fire-prevention means," the police said.

Popov, the organizer of the congress, was officially informed that this large-scale event could not be held.

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