



Section: **News**

Russian court bans Jehovah's Witnesses branch in Jewish Autonomous Region



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MOSCOW, October 12 (RAPSI) – A court in the Jewish Autonomous Region has ruled to ban a branch of “The Jehovah’s Witnesses” in Birobidzhan because of distributing extremist literature by the organization, according to the court’s website.

A lawsuit seeking prohibition of the local religious organization “The Jehovah’s Witnesses” has been filed by the Main Department of the Ministry of Justice of the Khabarovsk Krai and Jewish Autonomous Region.

According to the Ministry, facts of keeping and distribution of extremist materials were revealed in 2015 and 2016. Leaders of “The Jehovah’s Witnesses” were held administratively liable; the organization was formally noticed about inadmissibility of carrying out extremist activity.

The defendant’s representative, committee chairman of “The Jehovah’s Witnesses” in Birobidzhan, has not admitted plaintiff’s claim.

The ruling may be appealed in the Supreme Court of Russia.

Jehovah’s Witnesses have had many legal problems in Russia.

On June 16, Russia’s Supreme Court declared “The Jehovah’s Witnesses of Stary Oskol” in Belgorod Region an extremist organization and ruled to liquidate it.

On June 9, the Jehovah’s Witnesses of Belgorod was banned as extremist organization.

In March 2015, a court in Tyumen fined the organization 50,000 rubles (\$800) and seized prohibited literature.

In January 2014, a court in Kurgan ruled to ban the organization’s booklets as extremist. The books talk about how to have a happy life, what you can hope for, how to develop good relations with God and what you should know about God and its meaning.

In late December 2013, the leader of the sect’s group in Tobolsk, Siberia was charged with extremism and the prevention of a blood transfusion that nearly led to the death of a female member of the group.

In 2004, a court in Moscow dissolved and banned a Jehovah’s Witnesses group on charges of recruiting children, encouraging believers to break from their families, inciting suicide and preventing believers from accepting medical assistance.

Jehovah’s Witnesses is an international religious organization based in Brooklyn, New York. Since 2004 sever branches and chapters of the organization were banned and shut down in various regions of Russia.

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