

RUSSIA: 22 Jehovah's Witnesses behind bars/ First female JW locked up

JW Headquarters / Russia Religion News (10.07.2018) – <https://www2.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/180706a.html> – On 6 July 2018, 46-year-old Sergei Poliakov and his wife, Anastasia, who are suspected of professing the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses, were sent to an Omsk SIZO (pretrial detention). They were arrested during searches conducted on 4 July 2018 in the homes of local residents.

The Poliakov couple were incommunicado for two days and the door to their apartment was found to be broken down. Simultaneous searches were conducted in at least four residences of Omsk. Beginning at 7:00 a.m., searches continued until 15:00 and were conducted in houses, parcels of land, business structures, and in citizens' parked cars. All sorts of electronic devices and data storage were seized. During a search, witnesses actively helped law enforcement personnel, prompted, and even tried to question believers. The operation was conducted by Denis Loginovsky, an investigator of the Azov Investigation Department of the Russian Investigative Committee for Omsk oblast.

It is still not known which articles the criminal case will be based on. However law enforcement agencies in various regions of Russia mistakenly take the shared religious confession of citizens as participation in an extremist organization. The attention of prominent public figures of Russia and also of the Council for Human Rights under the Russian president has already been called to this problem. (tr. by PDS, posted 9 July 2018)