

RUSSIA: Evangelical believer convicted under anti-evangelism law

Russia Religion News (14.08.2018) – <https://bit.ly/20QZMcl> – On 3 July 2018, Judge N.V. Rudnikova of the Mglin district court, after reviewing case No. 12-95/2018 against brother Vitaly Andreevich Boksha, established: on 15 May 2018, at 9:30 a.m., V.A. Boksha conducted missionary activity in a residence located at the address: Briansk oblast, Mglin, Kalinin St., house 46. . . by distributing information about the religion of Evangelical Christians-Baptists . . . among persons who are not participants (member, adherents) of said religious association, for the purpose of drawing said persons into the ranks of participants. . . .

The court decided: to find Vitaly Andreevich Boksha guilty of committing an administrative violation of law specified in part 4 of article 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Violations of Law of the RF, and to assign a penalty in the form of an administrative fine of 5,000 rubles (79 US\$).

During the judicial session, a precinct inspector confirmed that on instruction of the FSB he conducted a verification of compliance with the law “On freedom of conscience and religious associations.” During the verification neighbors were questioned, who confirmed that Vitaly Andreevich gave them religious literature, but they did not attend worship services.

The brother did not agree with the court's decision and filed an appeal in oblast court in which he wrote: According to the court's resolution, I conducted missionary activity in a residence on 15 May 2018 at 9:30 a.m., but at the same time the materials of the case do not contain information sufficient to categorize my actions under part 4 of article 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Violations of Law of the RF.

Moreover, on 15 May 2018 . . . I was not at the address indicated in the court's indictment. I was at the police department of the city of Mglin, to which I had been previously called by a summons which I have in my hands and which I can present as evidence in my defense.

The protocol on administrative violation of law also does not indicate which citizens I was conducting missionary activity with on 15 May 2018.

In light of the foregoing, I think that the official who opened a case regarding administrative violation of law with respect to me, and the court that issued a ruling, did not have sufficient bases for finding me guilty of violation of part 4 of article 5.26 of the CAVL of the RF and they were actually unable to prove my guilt of conducting illegal missionary activity.

I ask that the court's ruling . . . with respect to me be nullified and the proceedings on the case be terminated.

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