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## **RUSSIA: Freedom of religion or belief : Special bimonthly FORB (16-31.01.2022)**

### **RUSSIA: Freedom of religion or belief : Special bimonthly FORB (16-31.01.2022)**

**31.01.2022 – A Primorye court sentenced two Jehovah's Witnesses to a five-year suspended sentence for discussions about God**

Link to full text in Russian:  
<https://jw-russia.org/news/2022/01/311556.html>

On January 31, 2021, Judge of the Pozharsky District Court of Primorsky Territory Yevgeniy Stefanyuk found 66-year-old Sergey Sergeyev and 57-year-old Yuriy Belosludtsev from Luchegorsk guilty of extremism for talking about God and sentenced both to a suspended sentence of 5 years.

Sergey Sergeyev said before the verdict: "I have never had a desire to harm someone ... I am accused of committing a serious crime, not because I did something bad or harmed someone, but because I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses."

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**31.01.2022 – Five Sakhalin-based believers received suspended sentences ranging from two to six-and-a-half years for reading the Bible**

Link to full text in Russian:  
<https://jw-russia.org/news/2022/01/311528.html>

On January 31, 2022 Judge Nikita Kucherov of the Nevelsk City Court of Sakhalin Region found local Jehovah's Witnesses guilty of participating in the activities of an extremist organization or in its organization. Sergey Kulakov and Yevgeniy Yelin were sentenced to 6.5 years of suspended imprisonment based on the more grave part of the article.

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**28.01.2022 – RUSSIA: Three acquitted on "extremism" charges but jailings continue**

An appeal court has overturned the suspended sentences handed to three Jehovah's Witnesses. "We hope that the Kamchatka example will turn out to have an effect on other judges, and they will take the liberty of correcting the mistakes made by

their colleagues,” said Jehovah’s Witness Yaroslav Sivulsky. The acquittals may be linked to Supreme Court amendments governing the implementation of “extremism” laws. Yet prosecutions continue. On 25 January, an Astrakhan court handed Anna Safronova the longest prison sentence yet given to a Jehovah’s Witness woman – six years. The Justice Ministry did not answer as to whether Russia had become a safer country as a consequence of the prosecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses and Muslim Nursi readers.

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### **27.01.2022 – Judge applies Supreme Court ruling in Jehovah’s Witnesses’ favor**

On 20 January 2022, the Pechora city court of the republic of Komi returned to the Pechora district prosecutor’s office a case of Jehovah’s Witnesses from Pechora who are accused on the basis of article 282.2 of the Criminal Code (arranging the activity of an extremist organization or membership in it). Believers report the return to the prosecutor of the case of “all seven” defendants, but the case file at the website of the court mentions nine defendants.

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### **27.01.2022 – Thousands of Jehovah’s Witnesses were among the millions victims of nazism**

Link to full text in Russian:  
<https://jw-russia.org/news/2022/01/271353.html>

On January 27, the world observes the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, a symbolic date to commemorate the victims of Nazism. Murderous Nazi terror targeted millions for reasons of biology, nationality, or political ideology. Few people

recognize that the Nazis' victims included thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses, who suffered for their Christian faith.

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### **26.01.2022 – Case filed in Dagestan against alleged follower of Turkish theologian Said Nursi**

On January 26, 2021, it became known that the Investigation Department of the RF Investigative Committee for the Republic of Dagestan opened a criminal case under Part 2 of Art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code (participation in the activities of an extremist organization) against a resident of the city of Izberbash.

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### **26.01.2022 – For the first time in Russia, a Court sentenced a woman to a six-year prison sentence for adhering to beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses**

Link to full text in Russian:  
<https://jw-russia.org/news/2022/01/260838.html>

On January 25, 2022, Aleksandr Lepsy, a judge of the Trusovskiy District Court of Astrakhan, considered Anna Safronova's participation in Bible discussions extremism and sentenced her to 6 years in a penal colony, as requested by the prosecutor. After the verdict was announced, the believer was taken into custody.

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### **22.01.2022 – RUSSIA: Aleksei Yershov is already the second Jehovah's Witness to be sent behind bars in 2022**

A court in Seversk sentenced this 68-year old Jehovah's Witness to three years in a penal colony. A week ago, Maksim Nikolayevich Beltikov was sentenced to two years in prison

On 19 January 2022, Judge of the Seversky City Court of the Tomsk Region Yalchin Badalov found 68-year-old Jehovah's Witness Alexei Ershov guilty of participating in "extremist activities" (Part 2 of Art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code) and sentenced him to three years in a penal colony. The convict was taken into custody in the courtroom, reports the correspondent of the Portal "Credo.Press" with reference to sources among Russian Jehovah's Witnesses.

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### **21.01.2022 – RUSSIA: Suspended sentences and fines – list**

Courts across Russia have jailed on "extremism"-related criminal charges many Jehovah's Witnesses and Muslims who read the works of the Turkish theologian Said Nursi. Courts have punished still more with suspended sentences or fines. Nearly 100 Jehovah's Witnesses are now on probation after receiving suspended sentences, as well as one Muslim Nursi reader. Jehovah's Witnesses serving suspended sentences have described the consequences, including being unable to see relatives living in other regions, and finding it impossible to secure jobs. A total of 20 Jehovah's Witnesses have been fined. Jehovah's Witness Yevgeny Yakku was fined more than a year's average wage in his home region of Arkhangelsk.

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### **21.01.2022 – Russia: Two Jehovah's Witnesses sentenced to four and seven years in prison**

On January 20, 2022, the Seversky City Court found Jehovah's

Witness Yevgeny Korotun guilty of organizing the activities of an extremist organization under Part 1 of Art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code and sentenced to seven years in prison with subsequent restriction of liberty for two years and a five-year ban on working in educational institutions and “placement of any educational information”, including on the Internet. Thus, the court granted the request of the prosecutor who asked for such a verdict during the debate.

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### **21.01.2022 – Jehovah’s Witnesses from Kursk lose their appeal**

On 20 January, a Kursk oblast court denied an appeal against a guilty verdict by a trial court for Jehovah’s Witnesses Andrei Andreev, Andrei Ryshkov, Alexander Vospitaniuk, and Artem and Alevtina Bagratian. Thus the sentence has taken legal effect and the convicts received real prison time for their faith, a correspondent of the Credo.Press portal reports, citing a source among Russian Jehovah’s Witnesses.

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**20.01.2022 – A Court convicted 70-year-old Ural-based retiree Lyudmila Salikova to serve a six-year suspended sentence for reading the Bible**

Link to full text in Russian:  
<https://jw-russia.org/news/2022/01/201429.html>

On January 20, 2022, the judge of the Snezhinskiy City Court of the Chelyabinsk Region Timofey Smolyuk found Lyudmila Salikova guilty of organizing the activities of an extremist community and gave her a 6-year suspended sentence with a 4-year probation period for not giving up her faith in Jehovah God.

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### **18.01.2022 – Some Jehovah's Witnesses benefit from Supreme Court's ruling**

A Kamchatka territorial court, during a second consideration of the case, ruled three Jehovah's Witnesses to be not guilty: the married couple Konstantin and Snezhana Bazhenov and the retiree Vera Zolotova. Novaya Gazeta was told this in the European Association of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Previously all three were found guilty of participating in the activity of an extremist organization (part 2, article 282.2 of the Criminal Code).

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**Further reading about Russia on our database**

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