

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Undefined index: et_template in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1216

RUSSIA: 12 Jehovah's Witnesses sentenced to 76 years in prison in March-April

RUSSIA: In March-April, 12 Jehovah's Witnesses sentenced to 76 years in prison in all

By Willy Fautré



European Times (29.04.2023) – Not only Russian citizens disagreeing about Russia’s war on Ukraine or asking Putin to stop the war are sentenced to heavy prison terms. Jehovah’s Witnesses whose organization was banned by the Supreme Court in 2017 are arrested and sentenced to huge prison terms for merely practicing their faith in private. Moreover, SOVA CENTER, one of the main sources of information about human rights and religious freedom in Russia, is about to be liquidated. On 27 April 2023 Judge Vyacheslav Polyga of the Moscow City Court considered the request filed by Russia’s Ministry of Justice to liquidate the Regional Public Association “Sova” and decided to approve it. The source of the documented cases hereafter is SOVA CENTER, a non-faith-based NGO.

A Jehovah’s Witness sentenced to eight years in prison in Vladivostok

On 27 April 2023, the Pervorechensky District Court of Vladivostok sentenced Jehovah’s Witness **Dmitry Barmakin** to eight years in a general regime colony with an additional restriction of liberty for one year. He was found guilty under Part 1 of Art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code (organization of the activities of an extremist organization).

The criminal case against Dmitry Barmakin was **initiated** on 27 July 2018. On the next day he was detained together with his wife Elena and then arrested. In June 2019, the case was **sent** to court, and in October Barmakin was released from the pre-trial detention center, with a preventive measure in the form of a ban on certain activities. The investigation claimed that from 15 October 2017 to 28 July 2018, Barmakin was the driving force of the local religious organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Vladivostok.

In Akhtubinsk, three Jehovah’s Witnesses sentenced to seven

years in prison each

On 17 April 2023, the Akhtuba District Court of the Astrakhan Region sentenced Jehovah's Witnesses **Rinat Kiramov, Sergei Korolev and Sergei Kosyanenko**, accused of organizing the activities of an extremist organization (Part 1 of Art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code) and financing of extremism (Part 1 of Art. 282.3 of the Criminal Code). Each of them was sentenced to **seven years** in prison to be served in a general regime colony. In addition, the court imposed additional penalties on them: a three-year ban on activities related to the management and participation in public organizations, as well as restriction of liberty for one year.

According to the investigation, from July 2017 to November 2021, the accused continued to organize meetings, knowing about the national ban on the organization's activities. The investigation claimed that they also promoted the benefits of their religious teachings, distributed literature recognized as extremist, recruited local residents and "collected money under the guise of donations, and "for the purpose of conspiracy" used videoconferencing for communication.

Korolev, Kosyanenko and Kiramov were arrested on 9 November 2021 in Akhtubinsk and Znamensk, Astrakhan region.

In the Kemerovo region, a Jehovah's Witness was sentenced to six years in prison

On 31 March 2023, the Belovsky City Court of the Kemerovo region sentenced Jehovah's Witness **Sergei Ananin**, accused under Part 1 of Art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code (organization of the activities of an extremist organization). He was sentenced to **six years** in a general regime colony. He was taken into custody in the courtroom.

During the debate of the parties on 21 March, the public prosecutor asked to sentence Ananin to eight years in prison.

According to the investigation, the accused held online gatherings from July 2017 to June 2020 to study materials sent from the “central office” of the organization and special literature “propaganda”, although their religious organization had been banned across the whole country.

The criminal case was initiated in February 2021.

A court in Moscow sentenced five Jehovah's Witnesses

On 31 March 2023, the Babushkinsky District Court of Moscow issued a verdict in the case of five Jehovah's Witnesses. **Yuri Chernyshev, Ivan Tchaikovsky, Vitaly Komarov and Sergei Shatalov**, were accused under Part 1 of Art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code (organization of the activities of an extremist organization) The court sentenced them to **six years and three months** in a general regime colony with a three-year ban on the management and participation in public organizations. As an additional punishment, the court sentenced them to one year of restriction of liberty. **Vardan Zakaryan** was found guilty by the court for violating Art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code (involvement in the activities of an extremist organization) and was sentenced to **four years and three months** in prison.

According to the investigation, the accused organized the work of the Management Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia banned in 2017. They shared religious literature promoting the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses with other people and “recruited” new participants from among residents of Moscow.

A Jehovah's Witness sentenced to six and a half years in Khabarovsk

On 27 March 2023, the Soviet-Havan City Court of the Khabarovsk Territory issued a verdict in the case of Jehovah's Witness **Alexei Ukhov**, sentencing him to **six and a half years** in a penal colony under Part 1 of Art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code (organization of the activities of an extremist organization).

Ukhov was arrested and detained on 22 October 2020 after a series of searches of Jehovah's Witnesses in Soviet Harbor. On 9 July 2021, he was released from the pre-trial detention center on recognizance not to leave. His case went to court on 2 August 2021.

Six years in prison for a Jehovah's Witness in Krasnoyarsk

On 17 March 2023, the Sosnovoborsk City Court of Krasnoyarsk Krai found Jehovah's Witness **Yuri Yakovlev** guilty of organizing the activities of an extremist organization (Part 1 of Art. 282.2 of the Criminal Code) and sentenced him to **six years** in prison in a general regime colony.

According to the investigation, Yakovlev organized online gatherings of the banned organization of Jehovah's Witnesses, was engaged in "pastoral work" and led "preaching activities".

Yakovlev was arrested on 28 March 2022 for his involvement in the activities of an extremist organization due to the fact that in April 2017 the Supreme Court of Russia banned the Management Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia and 395 local religious organizations said to be "extremist."

Further reading about FORB in Russia on HRWF website

Notice: Undefined index: et_footer_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1267

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1267

Notice: Undefined index: et_footer_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1268

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in
/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-
content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line **1268**

Notice: Undefined index: et_template in
/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-
content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line **1269**