

# **RUSSIA: Jehovah's Witnesses imprisoned 2 months without trial**

PEACEFUL CITIZENS DETAINED FOR 55 DAYS IN ARCTIC

Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia, 11 May 2018

Russia Religion News (13.05.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2KYNJIT> – Forty-four-year-old Roman Markin and sixty-one-year-old Viktor Trofimov, residents of the city of Polyarny (Murmansk oblast), were sent to the SIZO [pre-trial detention cell] for two months on suspicion of “conducting the activity of an extremist organization” (part 1 of article 282.2 of the Criminal Code of RF). They were held incommunicado after searches that were conducted on 18 April 2018 in that city in seven apartments belonging to citizens who were thought to be Jehovah's Witnesses.

The searches were conducted practically simultaneously, with the participation of armed OMON personnel who acted extremely rudely. Roman Markin was at home in the evening with his 16-year-old daughter. At 19:40 the door to their apartment was broken down by special forces. Threatening with weapons, they forced them to lie on the floor and searched them. Markin's daughter was taken away and interrogated until 3:00 a.m. In another place, an elderly man opened the door to a group of armed special forces and they shoved him with such force that he fell. By their actions the law enforcement agents injured another two women who were visiting. Teenagers, a brother and

sister, were pinned to the wall and ordered to keep their arms extended. In all, 17 citizens were searched, all electronics were seized, and they were taken for questioning, which lasted until 7:00 a.m.

A criminal case was opened on 12 April 2018 by the Investigation Department for the closed region of Alexandrovsk (that includes the city of Polyarny and Snezhnogorsk) of the Investigation Directorate of the Investigative Committee of Russia for Murmansk oblast. Believers were interrogated by several investigators, including Ivan Misa. The case was a direct consequence of the decision of the Russian Supreme Court for the liquidation and ban of activity of all 396 registered organizations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia. Law enforcement agents often mistake citizens' sharing a religious belief for participation in an extremist organization.

It is noteworthy that earlier, on 23 October 2016, brochures that are on the Federal List of Extremist Materials were planted in a worship service of Jehovah's Witnesses in the city of Snezhnogorsk. At that time, personnel of law enforcement agencies drove up to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses and, citing "reports received," declared that there may be weapons in the building. As expected, weapons were not found, although the forbidden brochures were demonstratively "discovered." The epidemic of such falsifications also led to the decision of the Russian Supreme Court, which became the reason for the arrest of believers.

Roman Nikolaevich Markin (born 1974) and Viktor Fedorovich Trofimov (born 1957) are in SIZO No. 1 of the Federal Penitentiary Service for Murmansk oblast. (tr. by PDS, posted 11 May 2018)

.....  
If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, [click here](#) for a free subscription to our newsletters!

*Also:*

HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>

List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>