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RUSSIA: Special Bi-monthly Digest on FORB (16-31 March 2020)

News about Jehovah's Witnesses and other religious issues
– As of March 31, 2020, there were
325 Jehovah's Witnesses under investigation and facing criminal charges
35 in prison (26 pretrial)
18 under house arrest
24 convicted (9 imprisoned, 9 fined, 6 received other penalties)

27.03.20 – FSB officers in Khabarovsk, aware of the recent death of a believer, raided the home of his widow
Link to full text in Russian
<https://jw-russia.org/news/2020/03/8.html>

On March 23, 2020, FSB officers ransacked the home and seized personal items of 38-year-old Yelena Avramenko. A ruling was issued for the search although her husband, Igor, recently died of heart failure. This circumstance did not deter investigator Stanislav Grebenkin from the disrespectful intrusion.

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26.03.20 – Investigation of Japanese cult leader completed

Link to full text in

Russian: <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=74531>

The investigator has completed the investigation and has sent to the prosecutor's office the case against the head of the Russian cell of the terrorist association Aum Shinrikyo (which is forbidden in the RF), Mikhail Ustiantsev, an official representative of the S.K.R. [Investigative Committee of Russia], Svetlana Petrenko, reported.

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25.03.20 – Sentencing of Jehovah's Witness set for Tuesday

Link to full text in

Russian: <https://ovdinfo.org/express-news/2020/03/25/prokuror-zaprosil-7-let-obvinyaemomu-po-delu-svideteley-iegovy>

In the Lensk district court of the republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the prosecutor's office demanded a real time sentence for Igor Ivashin, who is accused of directing the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses.

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25.03.20 – Convicted Jehovah's Witnesses win appeal of penalty

Link to full text in

Russian: <https://tass.ru/proisshestviya/8076215>

On Wednesday, the oblast court of Penza overturned the decision of the court of the first instance, which sentenced to six years in a penal colony the leader of the local cell of the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses (which is forbidden in Russia), Vladimir Alushkin, as well as five subjects of the case, who were given suspended prison terms. The case was sent for another review in the Lenin district court of Penza, TASS was told in the press service of the oblast court.

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25.03.2020 – In the City of Penza, Court of Appeal overturns

conviction of six Jehovah's Witnesses. Alushkin must leave jail in the near future

Link to full text in Russian:

<https://jw-russia.org/news/2020/03/7.html>

On March 25, 2020, the Penza Regional Court quashed the verdict for believers Vladimir and Tatyana Alushkin, Vladimir Kulyasov, Andrey Magliv, Galiya Olkhova, and Denis Timoshin and returned the case for a new trial. Vladimir Alushkin should exit the pre-trial detention center as soon as the hard copy of the appeal ruling is received there.

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24.03.2020 – Tactics of intimidation against Jehovah's Witnesses

Link to full text in Russian: <https://novayagazeta.ru/news/2020/03/24/160047-v-yoshkar-ole-prishedshih-na-zasedanie-po-delu-svideteley-iegovy-slushateley-vyzvali-na-dopros-v-fsb?fromtg=1>

In Yoshkar-Ola, arrivals for a court session regarding continuation of the measure of restriction of an adherent of the Jehovah's Witnesses (an organization ruled in Russia to be extremist and forbidden), Ekaterina Pagasheva, were given summons to interrogation at the F.S.B. This is stated on the website of the organization.

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24.03.2020 – Arrival for trial of Jehovah's Witnesses in Yoshkar-Ola given summons to interrogation at F.S.B.

Link to the full text in Russian: <https://zona.media/news/2020/03/23/pegasheva>
Believers coming for a court session regarding the Jehovah's Witness Ekaterina Pegasheva from Mari El in Yoshkar-Ola were handed summons to interrogation in the local department of the F.S.B. This was reported on the website of the organization.

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17.03.2020 – European Union calls on Russian authorities to stop ill-treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses

Link to full text in Russian: <https://jw-russia.org/news/2020/03/6.html>
A joint statement of the 27 European states-members of the

European Union (EU) was circulated on March 12, 2020, in Vienna at a meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The statement was joined by another six non-EU countries.

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14.03.2020 – Jehovah's Witnesses mount defense in south of Russia

Link to full text in Russia: <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/347068/>

The investigation and prosecution may summon Jehovah's Witnesses for questioning, but this will not force them to refuse to support their fellow believers, who have already been put on trial on a charge of extremism, representatives of the congregation declare.

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