

# Russia: Anti-evangelism law hits Russian protestants

## Three Baptists in Orel province fined on the basis of “Yarovaya Law”

Orlovskie Novosti (13.03.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2m3xilS> – The Uritsky district court of Orel province on 10 March sentenced three representatives of the Evangelical Christians Baptists to a fine for violation of the law on missionary activity. Orlovskie Novosti learned about this from its own sources.

According to the decision, each of the Baptists who appeared before the court on article 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Violations of Law (Violation of legislation on freedom of conscience and freedom of religious confession and on religious associations) was fined 5,000 rubles.

The court found the Baptists guilty of illegally engaging in the distribution of religious literature and inviting people to their religious meetings, while they had not notified the Russian Ministry of Justice about the start of the activity of the religious organization, as the law requires.

In July 2016, in Russia, a package of “anti-terrorism amendments” was adopted, which had been proposed by deputy Irina Yarovaya and senator Viktor Ozerov. Among other amendments, an amendment about missionary activity was introduced into the law. Thus, point 4 of article 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Violations of Law provides for a penalty in the form of an administrative fine for citizens of from 5,000 to 50,000 rubles and a fine of from 100,000 to one million rubles for legal entities.

The first decision based on the “Yarovaya Law” was issued on

30 September 2016 by a court in Orel, which sentenced an American Baptist missionary, Donald Ossewaard, to a fine of 40,000 rubles. The American did not succeed in challenging the fine in the Russian Supreme Court and then he announced that he intended to leave Russia after 14 years of residence in the country. (tr. by PDS, posted 14 March 2017)

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