

RUSSIA: NGOs express serious concerns about rights of defense violations in Scientology case

HRWF (20.11.2018) – Scientologists are in jail in Saint Petersburg for the sole fact of practicing their faith, which Russian authorities regard as “extremist,” a charge also used against other groups. We have followed with great concern news published in the Russian media about serious irregularities in the case of Scientologist Ivan Matsitsky, who has been in jail in the last seventeen months. The FSB is being accused of fabricating evidence, and the prosecuting judge of having violated the rights of the defense by not providing Matsitsky and his attorneys with the materials of the case within the date required by the law, and by extending Matsitsky’s pre-trial detention beyond any reasonable limit.

We understand that Matsitsky’s attorney has filed complaints against both Judge Evgeny Isakov and the FSB. We urge the Russian authorities to seriously investigate the complaints, to restore Matsitsky’s right of defense, and to abandon their faulty interpretation of the notion of extremism, which is used as a tool to ban unpopular religious minorities.

2018

CAP-LC Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour
la Liberté de Conscience

CESNUR – Center for Studies on New Religions

EIFRF European Inter-Religious Forum for Religious Freedom

FOB – European Federation for Freedom of Belief

FOREF – Forum for Religious Freedom Europe

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