

A Jehovah's Witness sentenced to a heavy fine for worshipping

217 JW are currently facing criminal charges

HRWF (05.07.2019) - On 4 July, the Ordzhonikidzevskiy District Court in Perm imposed a fine of 300,000 RUB (\$4,734) on Aleksandr Solovyev, a Jehovah's Witness, for participating in a religious service of his religious movement which was banned as an extremist organization by the Russian authorities two years ago. The prosecution had requested a 3.5-yr prison sentence. Attorneys representing Aleksandr plan to appeal the conviction. They have also filed an application with the United Nations Working Group Against Arbitrary Detention.

He is the third Jehovah's Witness to be convicted under Russian Criminal Code Article 282.2 (Organizing the activity of an extremist organization).

Background | Aleksandr Solovyev

Aleksandr was arrested on the evening of May 22, 2018, at a railway station, when he and his wife Anna were arriving home from a trip abroad. Police officers handcuffed Aleksandr and took him to a temporary detention center. Anna was also taken away by the police but in a separate vehicle. Officers searched their apartment all night and seized photographs, electronic devices, and a collection of Bibles.

After some questioning, Anna was released without any charges filed. However, a criminal case was initiated against Aleksandr and on May 24 he was placed under house arrest until November 19, 2018. Since then, while awaiting trial, he had had to comply with certain restrictions on his activities.

As of July 1, 2019

217 JWs were facing criminal charges

40 being held in detention

25 under house arrest

Case of Solovyev in Perm

Region: Perm Territory

Locality: Perm

Case number: 11802570030000021

Accused of: Participating in religious services, which is interpreted as taking part in the activity of an extremist organisation (with reference to the decision of the Russian Supreme Court on the liquidation of all 396 registered organisations of Jehovah's Witnesses in 2017)

Article of the Russian Criminal Code: 282.2 (2)

Investigating: Investigative Directorate of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation for the Perm Territory

Case initiated: 22 May 2018