



THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF
JEHOVAH'S CHRISTIAN WITNESSES

25 April 2014

From The European Association of Jehovah's Christian Witnesses

**Submission to the UN Human Rights Committee prior the adoption of
the List of Issues (111th Session - 7-25 July 2014)**

Seventh report of

Russian Federation

(113th Session of the Human Rights Committee, 9-27 March 2015)

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SUMMARY OF THE SUBMISSION

This submission to the Human Rights Committee on the Russian Federation highlights violations of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (“ICCPR”) prior to the adoption of the *List of issues to be taken up in connection with the consideration of the seventh report of the Russian Federation* (CCPR/C/RUS/7).

As described below, Jehovah’s Witnesses in Russia have experienced ongoing harassment, intimidation, and mistreatment because a number of Russian law-enforcement agencies misapply the 2006 revised Law on Counteracting Extremist Activity (Law on Extremism) to their religious activity. As a result, Jehovah’s Witnesses contend with numerous legal problems and human rights violations protected by the ICCPR. Furthermore, the lack of effective investigation by the authorities to prosecute acts of religious hatred against Jehovah’s Witnesses resulted in an increase of assaults against individuals. Urgent action is needed by the government of Russia to punish those responsible for the attacks and insure that freedom of religion is protected. Jehovah’s Witnesses in Russia and as a worldwide organization respectfully request the government of the Russian Federation to:

- (1) Refrain from misapplying the law on extremist activities against the well-known religious organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses [PACE Resolution 1896 (2012) – see appendix 4] and terminate all legal cases and criminal investigations against Jehovah’s Witnesses based on extremist charges;
- (2) Remove religious publications of Jehovah’s Witnesses from the Federal List of Extremist Materials;
- (3) Register the Moscow Community of Jehovah’s Witnesses and allow them to peacefully enjoy their worship as guaranteed by the ICCPR;
- (4) Protect the right of Jehovah’s Witnesses to profess their religious beliefs individually or jointly with others as guaranteed by the Russian Constitution and the ICCPR. This includes the right to own and use places of religious worship, as well as rent facilities for religious worship;
- (5) Protect the right of Jehovah’s Witnesses to share their religious beliefs with others as guaranteed by the Russian Constitution and the ICCPR,
- (6) Ensure that law enforcement authorities provide appropriate protection against assaults on Jehovah’s Witnesses in Russia and prosecute under the criminal law all who attack them while they peacefully share their religious beliefs with others;
- (7) Prevent further illegal police interference with Jehovah’s Witnesses’ peaceful exercise of their freedom of religion and freedom of assembly; and
- (8) Train the local authorities to respect the rights of the members of the legally acknowledged religious organizations and to promote “tolerance in Russian society across the country” (ECRI Report on the Russian Federation of 20 June 2013—see appendix 5);
- (9) Provide adequate protection for Kingdom Halls of Jehovah’s Witnesses and prosecute under the criminal law all those who vandalize their Kingdom Halls.

I. Introduction

1. The European Association of Jehovah's Christian Witnesses (EAJCW) is a charity registered in the United Kingdom. It is assisting the adherents of the faith of Jehovah's Witnesses in various areas of the world.
2. Jehovah's Witnesses have been present in Russia since 1891. They have enjoyed a measure of freedom to worship since receiving national registration on 11 December 1992. They also were reregistered on 29 April 1999, in accordance with the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations. There are now more than 168,000 Jehovah's Witnesses living in Russia.
3. Their ability to worship freely has been under threat during most of their existence in the Russian Federation. The situation has deteriorated considerably since the UN Human Rights Committee's (CCPR) adopted its concluding observations on Russia (CCPR/C/RUS/CO/6) at its 2681st meeting (CCPR/C/SR.2681), held on 28 October 2009.
4. The principle cause of this is the Russian authorities' misapplication of the 2006 revised Law on Counteracting Extremist Activity (Law on Extremism) to the peaceful religious activity of Jehovah's Witnesses.
5. This submission provides information prior to the adoption of the List of issues to be taken up in connection with the consideration of the seventh periodic report of the Russian Federation (CCPR/C/RUS/7). It focuses on the rights protected under Articles 2, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, and 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

II. Alleged Violations of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR – Articles 2, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, and 27)

Freedoms of Religion and Expression (ICCPR – Articles 18, 19, 26 and 27)

Criminal Prosecution of Jehovah's Witnesses Accused of Engaging in Extremist Activity

6. In its previous concluding observations (CCPR/C/RUS/CO/6) the CCPR already expressed its concern toward the Law on Counteracting Extremist Activity and made the following recommendation:
7. *“The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CCPR/CO/79/RUS, paragraph 20) that the State party should revise the Federal Law on Combating Extremist Activity with a view to making the definition of “extremist activity” more precise so as to exclude any possibility of arbitrary application, and consider repealing the 2006 amendment. Moreover, in determining whether written material constitutes “extremist literature”, the State party should take all measures to ensure the independence of experts upon whose opinion court decisions are based and guarantee the right of the defendant to counter-expertise by an alternative expert. The State party should also define the concept of “social groups” as stipulated in section 148 of the Criminal Code in a manner that does not include organs of the State or public officials.”*
8. When first misapplying the Law on Extremism, Russian law-enforcement agencies initially targeted the religious literature of Jehovah's Witnesses. However, since 2009, Russian authorities have launched dozens of criminal investigations against Jehovah's Witnesses for alleged extremist activity. Victims are usually charged under Articles 282, 282.1, and 282.2

of the Criminal Code (CrC) of the Russian Federation (RF) for organizing or participating in extremist activity. These charges can lead to stiff fines or up to six years in prison if not successfully challenged in court. There are currently four open criminal investigations and five pre-investigative inspections in the Moscow, Orenburg, Rostov, Voronezh, Krasnodarsky, and Primorsky Regions.

9. **Taganrog, Rostov Region.** For the first time since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian authorities have criminally charged Jehovah's Witnesses for merely carrying out their religious activity. The court has indicted sixteen Witnesses and their trial is underway.
10. On 11 September 2009, the Rostov Regional Court dissolved the LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Taganrog as an extremist organization. On 5 August 2011, V. V. Pustynnikov, the Deputy Chief of the Investigative Section of the Headquarters of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for the South Federal Circuit, initiated a criminal case under Article 282.2(1) of the RF CrC against unnamed Jehovah's Witnesses for managing a liquidated organization. On 25 August 2011, law enforcement officers searched 19 homes of Jehovah's Witnesses and seized personal Bibles, other non-prohibited religious literature, computers, and other personal items. The searches began at 6 a.m. and lasted 8 to 11 hours.
11. On 4 February 2012, authorities opened a second criminal case under Article 282.2(2) of the RF CrC for participating in the activity of an organization that has been liquidated for extremist activity.
12. On 30 May 2012, authorities opened a third criminal case under Article 150(4) of the RF CrC for allegedly luring minors into committing a crime.
13. The cases were later combined and 16 Witnesses became targets of the criminal prosecution. Four male Witnesses were charged under Articles 282.2(1) and 150(4) of the RF CrC because they serve as congregation elders and conduct religious services. The charges under Article 150(4) can lead to 5-8 years in prison. The remaining 12 Witnesses, including 2 women, were charged under Article 282.2(2) because they attended religious services.
14. On 30 May 2013, the trial began in the Taganrog City Court. At present, the file includes 70 volumes of material, and the prosecutor has been giving the court his evidence for three months.
15. On 20 March 2014, the trial resumed and is expected to continue throughout April 2014. The case is still in progress.
16. **New Trial in Taganrog.** On 28 October 2013, the Rostov-on-Don Prosecutor's Office charged five other Jehovah's Witnesses under Article 282.2 of the RF CrC. The prosecutor alleges that the five are guilty of attending the religious meetings and studying the Bible with their fellow Witnesses after the dissolution of the LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Taganrog. The Witnesses expect the trial to begin before the end of 2014.
17. **Orenburg, Orenburg Region.** On 28 April 2012, the investigative body of the Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation for the Orenburg Region opened a criminal case under Article 282(1) of the RF CrC against Jehovah's Witnesses in the Orenburg Region for holding religious meetings and distributing extremist publications within the period of June 1994 and April 2012.
18. On 4 May 2012, investigators, local FSB, and officials from the Department of the Ministry of Interior conducted 15 raids on homes and places of worship of Jehovah's Witnesses in

Buguruslan, Buzuluk, Orenburg, Orsk, and Yasniy. The officers seized books, including Bibles, computer discs, hard drives, photo albums, personal notes, and other personal items.

19. In July 2013, authorities charged five Witness men for violating Article 282(1) of the RF CrC—Nikolay Stolpovskiy, Aleksandr Suvorov, Sergey Logunov, Vladimir Kochnyev, and Sergey Miroshnikov. The names of four of them (ex. A. Suvorov) were put on the list of active terrorists and extremists, which is posted on the Web site of the Federal Service of Financial Monitoring. Their personal bank accounts were frozen. However, because the time limit for criminal prosecution has expired, the case may be closed and their bank accounts released.
20. **Sergiev Posad, Moscow Region.** On 9 April 2013, authorities opened a criminal case under Article 282(2)(c) of the RF CrC.
21. On 12 April 2013, police and officers from the Department for Counteracting Extremism raided the Kingdom Hall and the homes of two members of the Sergiev Posad LRO.
22. The raid on the Kingdom Hall took place immediately after the religious service had ended, where 76 congregation members and interested persons were in attendance. A group of 15 officers from the police and the Department for Counteracting Extremism recorded the names and addresses of those present and inspected the premises.
23. On 12 April 2013, law enforcement officers searched the homes of the LRO Chairman and another Witness, an LRO committee member. During the search of Mr. Stepanov's home, the officers found a copy of the book *Knowledge that Leads to Everlasting Life*, which is on the Federal list of Extremist Materials; Mr. Stepanov strongly suspects that the officers planted the book. The officers seized religious literature, including nine various editions of the Bible, personal notebooks, computers, and electronic storage media.
24. On 15 April 2013, the Sergievo-Posadskiy City Court of the Moscow Region declared the April 12 search of Andrey Sivak's home to be lawful. The case is still pending.
25. On 16 June 2013, Vyacheslav Stepanov and Andrey Sivak are charged under Article 282(2)(c) of the RF CrC.
26. On 28 October and 13 November 2013, an "expert study" concludes that the religious activity of Vyacheslav Stepanov and Andrey Sivak is "extremist." On 24 February 2014, the preliminary investigation is now complete and the case will soon be transferred to court for a trial.

Court cases aimed at pronouncing the religious literature of Jehovah's Witnesses extremist

27. The 11 September 2009, decision of the Rostov Regional Court and subsequent court rulings in Gorno-Altaysk, Kemerovo, Krasnodar, and Salsk pronounced 69 religious publications of Jehovah's Witnesses extremist. These publications have been posted on the Federal List of Extremist Materials issued by the RF Ministry of Justice (The total number of religious publications declared extremist is 69. However, four publications are mentioned twice since they were repeatedly found as extremist by some courts. The actual number is 65.)
28. Additional civil cases focusing on the religious publications of Jehovah's Witnesses are currently underway in the cities of Birobidzhan, Chelyanbinsk, Matveyev-Kurgan, Sochi, Kurgan, Vladimir. Further information on each case is available upon request.

Attempts to declare the official Web site of Jehovah's Witnesses extremist

29. On 7 August 2013, the Tsentralniy District Court of Tver, in an ex parte hearing, declared jw.org to be extremist without involving the owner and publisher of the site—Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., (WT-NY). The decision stated in part:
30. To protect the rights, freedoms, and legal interests of the general public, the Tver Regional Prosecutor filed a claim in court under Article 45 of the Civil Procedural Code (CPC) of the Russian Federation (RF) requesting that the informational materials of the religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses distributed by means of the Internet—the Web site with the electronic address <http://www.jw.org> be declared extremist.
31. The Tver Regional Prosecutor claimed that jw.org should be declared extremist because it contains religious publications of Jehovah's Witnesses already declared extremist and banned in Russia. Since 2009, various Russian courts have banned a total of 69 publications of Jehovah's Witnesses. The Witnesses are challenging these domestic rulings in the European Court of Human Rights. The banned publications comprise a very small fraction of the religious material available on the jw.org Web site.
32. The Tsentralniy District Court of Tver did not consider it necessary to involve WT-NY in the trial even though WT-NY publishes jw.org for Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide to use in their religious worship. The court reasoned that because WT-NY is a foreign legal entity, the decision to ban jw.org in the territory of the Russian Federation does not violate its rights or interests. Additionally, the court did not involve the Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia (the national office) or individual Witnesses, even though its decision had a direct impact on Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the country. On 22 November 2013, the court denied petitions by both the Administrative Center and affected individuals to be included in the case.
33. The jw.org Web site is published in more than 325 languages. At least 40 million visits are recorded every month worldwide, including over a half million within Russia. Millions of publications and videos promoting moral values and Bible education are downloaded each month, free of charge, in one of 611 available languages. The Web site is also adapted for the sight and hearing impaired.
34. On 22 January 2014, the Tver Regional Court reversed the lower court's decision. The regional court concluded that the Web site did not contain any "extremist" material. However, despite this decision, the site is still unavailable in many parts of Russia due to the fact that Internet providers have been ordered to block it on the basis of other court decisions handed down since 2010. There are estimated to be approximately 30 of such decisions.
35. On 4 February 2014, the WT-NY appealed the decision of the Krasnooktyabrskiy District Court of Volgograd to obligate the provider Svyazinform-Volgograd Ltd., to block access to the Web site jw.org. The appeal hearing was scheduled on 24 April 2014.
36. On 25 February 2014, the Krasnoarmeyskiy District Court of Volgograd ruled to order provider Kolombiya Telekom to block access to the site, despite the fact that the provider argued that there were no extremist publications on the site. An appeal was filed by WT-NY.

Freedom of Thought, Conscience or Religion, Right of peaceful assembly and freedom of association (ICCPR – Articles 18, 19, 21, 22, 26, 27)

Difficulties to obtain land for houses of worship

37. Jehovah's Witnesses experience difficulties in obtaining land for constructing places of worship. In many large cities, they repeatedly file applications requesting a plot of land for constructing a Kingdom Hall at their own expense. However, local officials deny their requests.
38. For example, the Kazan LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses, Republic of Tatarstan, has requested a parcel of land from the local authorities for ten years. There are about 700 Witnesses in Kazan. Jehovah's Witnesses in the cities of Samara, Kirov, Petropavlovsk-Kamtchatski, Riazan, Tambov, and Ufa, as well as in other areas, face similar issues.

Disruption of regular religious meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses

39. Throughout 2013, Jehovah's Witnesses experienced difficulties conducting their regular religious meetings and large annual conventions.
40. Despite the ruling of the Russian Constitutional Court dated 5 December 2012, (see appendix 3) six administrative cases were initiated against individual Witnesses on charges of failing to notify local authorities of holding their assemblies or the Memorial of Jesus Christ's Death. As a result, in five of these six instances the courts ruled to fine the Witnesses.
41. **Moscow.** On 2 July 2013, over 20 officers from the Centre for Counteracting Extremism, the police, and the prefecture of the Western Administrative District of Moscow raided a religious service of Jehovah's Witnesses at the Setun Culture Hall. The officers interrupted the meeting and searched the premises. Reporters and camera crews from several media organizations arrived with the officials and filmed the proceedings.
42. At first the officers refused to state the purpose or basis for the raid, but later presented an order signed by A. A. Kuzin, the Deputy Chief of the Police Department for the Western Administrative District of the State Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for Moscow. The order authorized the investigation of Jehovah's Witnesses in order to find evidence that they advocate the superiority of their religious beliefs over others.
43. The senior officer went on stage and announced to the approximately 150 Witnesses in attendance that he was terminating the religious service. He ordered the women and children to leave, but ordered the men (approximately 40) to remain. The officers recorded their passport information, addresses, and telephone numbers. The officers then took five of the men for questioning to Police Station 9 in the Mozhayskiy Department of the Main Police Directorate for the Western Administrative District of Moscow. At the station, a police officer on duty stated that they had received "an order from the top" to target Jehovah's Witnesses.
44. During the search of the Culture Hall, the law-enforcement officers "found" religious literature published by Jehovah's Witnesses that appears on the Federal List of Extremist Materials. The Witnesses are convinced that the officers planted the literature at the scene. During the investigation, Police Major Andrey Mishel made unfounded and offensive remarks against the Witnesses, which were recorded on video.

Disruption of the annual conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses

45. As a result of interference on the part of the Russian Orthodox Church or FSB officers in the rental agreements between the Witnesses' LROs and venue owners, the peaceful annual conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses were disrupted in 11 cities of the Russian Federation.
46. In several incidents the Russian authorities were reported as acting beyond the boundaries of the law and infringing on the rights of Jehovah's Witnesses.
47. **Gorodets, Nizhniy Novgorod Region.** On 21 May 2013, local Jehovah's Witnesses submitted a request to Mr. V. Trufanov, Head of the Administration for the Gorodetskiy District, Nizhniy Novgorod Region, to rent the Spartak stadium for an annual convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. On 25 June 2013, Mr. Trufanov denied the request stating that the Gorodetskiy District Administration consulted an Orthodox priest and decided to deny it because "Gorodets is the spiritual capital of the Northern Nizhegorod Region, where the remains of 170 saints are buried; it is visited by hundreds of Orthodox pilgrims every day." The Russian Ombudsman, who was informed by Jehovah's Witnesses of the incident, filed a claim with the Gorodets City Court disputing Mr. Trufanov's action against the Witnesses. On 5 September 2013, the court granted the Ombudsman's demand.).
48. **Chelyabinsk.** Jehovah's Witnesses arranged to hold their annual religious assembly in the Congress Hall of the City of Chelyabinsk on 26-28 July 2013. The FSB pressured the owner of the hall to cancel the lease despite the signed contracts. Later the Witnesses learned that the City Administration sent a written order to a number of the Chelyabinsk government agencies to report any attempt on the part of the Witnesses to rent a hall. On 5 August 2013, Department of Internal Policies for the Administration of the Governor of the Chelyabinsk Region sent a directive to the heads of the city circuits and municipal districts of the Chelyabinsk Region ordering them to inform them of any activities on the part of the local Jehovah's Witnesses, including attempts to rent facilities or hold religious assemblies.
49. **Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan.** Jehovah's Witnesses arranged an annual assembly on 26-28 July 2013, in Kazan with an expected attendance of 5,000. However, the administrators cancelled the contract on 17 July 2013, after being pressured by the FSB. Later Jehovah's Witnesses learned that the Head of the Office of the Tatarstan President sent a directive to the heads of municipal districts stating that directors of cultural or educational institutions should deny rental of their premises for religious events.

Raid on the Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses

50. On 1 April 2013, approximately 60 officials and law enforcement officers came to the Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses (Center) in Solnechnoye just before noontime to inspect the premises. They included the Police, the FSB, the Department for Counteracting Extremism, the OMON, representatives of several different district prosecutors' offices, the Transport Police, Federal Migration Services, Fire Safety Department, Sanitation and Epidemiology Department, State Narcotics Control, and other agencies. The inspection of the property and buildings lasted until nearly 8 p.m. In the course of the inspection, the following violations took place:
 - Law enforcement officers carried out the inspection, not based on evidence that there were violations of law, but with the intent of finding such evidence. Religious organizations are normally exempt from inspections.

- Deputy Kurortniy District Prosecutor Denis Aleksandrovich Oreshko stated that the reason for the comprehensive investigation was that they had a report that someone was being held against his will at the Center. Instead of looking for the alleged “victim,” the law enforcement officers examined religious publications at the Center.
- Entry onto the territory of the Center was without the consent of representatives of the organization. Officers initially came under the guise of touring the Center in order to gain entry.
- Law enforcement vehicles blocked all entrances, exits, and gates of the Center, thereby restricting the movements of the Center's residents and curtailing their activities.
- Only the officers from the prosecutor's office showed their official identification. The prosecutor could not identify the specialists (approximately 30 to 40 individuals) that came with him; their last names, positions, or places of employment.
- In several instances, the specialists invited by the prosecutor moved about the Center on their own, without the prosecutor and without a representative of the Center to accompany them.
- During the inspection, an agent accompanying the prosecutor took video recordings without the consent of the subjects involved, interfering with their right to privacy.
- Officials confiscated a book published by Jehovah's Witnesses containing internal canonical guidelines for ordained ministers and have experts associated with the FSB in St. Petersburg examining the book.
- On 3 April 2013, the Administrative Center received a fax from the Kurortniy District Prosecutor's Office demanding a large number of documents and answers to questions on the activity of the Center by noon on 4 April 2013. Though the deadline set by the prosecutor's office was unreasonable, representatives of the Center submitted the documents on time.

51. Russian officials have not taken any negative action against the Center since the raid on 1 April 2014. However, the Witnesses have not received any information on the progress of the FSB's expert study or when the study will be completed.

Investigations of Local Religious Organisations (LROs)

52. Since 1 March 2013, local prosecutor's offices have targeted LROs for comprehensive investigations in compliance with an order of the Prosecutor General's Office. Currently, 134 LROs and 21 religious groups have been subjected to inquiries.

53. The prosecutors are looking for lists of the members of each LRO and in some cases those of non-members, including their addresses. The LROs are required to provide the information on the publications that Jehovah's Witnesses distribute. In some cases, prosecutors demanded that the Witnesses bring their religious literature to the prosecutor's office, provide details on where their religious meetings are being held and how often they are conducted, and disclose sources of funds and financial records for three preceding years.

Physical violence, threats and threatening behaviour

54. On 18 May 2013, a Russian Orthodox priest, along with local residents and the local Cossack ataman, approached group of Jehovah's Witnesses as they were sharing in their door-to-door preaching activity. They ordered the Witnesses to leave the village and not to preach there anymore. The perpetrators threatened the Witnesses with violence and harm to their personal property. The priest called the police and representatives of the administration. After they arrived at the scene, the ataman addressed the crowd that had gathered and urged them to take action, including violent action, against the Witnesses. The ataman informed the crowd that investigative actions would be taken of any residents who had spoken with the Witnesses. The victims left.
55. On 15 September 2013, N. Savenkov, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, was sharing his religious beliefs by offering publications to people passing by on the sidewalk. Police officers V. Zhigalin and V. Makhova approached him and ordered him to provide the legal justification for his actions. N. Savenkov called his lawyer, M. Novikov, who arrived and tried to explain to the police that nothing illegal had taken place. The police officers proceeded to check N. Savenkov's and M. Novikov's documents, wrote down their passport information, and then made a video recording of the incident. Then V. Zhigalin informed M. Novakov that he was being detained, and using threats, he took him to a "safe room" in the Park House Trade Center. In the safe room, police officer V. Zhigalin punched lawyer M. Novakov in the arm and in his chest. The police officer then handcuffed M. Novakov and took him to MIA Police Station No. 3 along with N. Savenkov. At the police station, the police took the victims' documents, conducted personal body searches on them and seized their religious literature. At no time did the police attempt to justify the illegal detention. After being detained for six hours, the police finally released the two victims.
56. On 17 November 2013, two adult female Jehovah's Witnesses, R. Timokhina and M. Kurochkina, were attacked by a resident of an apartment building while they were sharing in their door-to-door preaching activity. Upon learning that the two women were Jehovah's Witnesses the perpetrator grabbed Ms Timokhina by the shoulder and tried to push her off the landing. He then grabbed Ms Kurochkina, pushed her to the ground, and began kicking her. The victims were finally able to get away from the perpetrator and leave the entryway, but the perpetrator caught up with them, grabbed Ms Kurochkina's religious literature and tore it into shreds. The victims went to an emergency medical clinic for treatment and then filed a complaint with the police.

Right to an effective remedy (article 2 ICCPR)

57. Jehovah's Witnesses have been actively trying to have their rights protected but in vain. There is actually no available effective remedy. As this Committee is well aware, the Russian Federation went as far as ignoring judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in favour of Jehovah's Witnesses. The ECHR condemned Russia in its comprehensive judgement dated 10 June 2010, *Jehovah's Witnesses of Moscow v. Russia*, no. 302/02, June 2010 (see appendix 1). This ECHR judgment declared that all of the Moscow Prosecutor's Office's charges against the Moscow Community were unfounded. The ECHR judgment also stated that Russian authorities should "put an end to the violation found by the Court and to redress so far as possible the effects."
58. The Moscow Community has repeatedly tried to reregister but authorities refused registration, and have challenged the refusals in the domestic courts, to no avail. On May 30, 2012, the Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses sent a letter to the RF Minister of

Justice, A. Konovalov, asking for the registration issue to be resolved in harmony with the direction of the ECHR. Nonetheless, authorities have not reversed the dissolution of the Moscow Community, and its activity is still banned on the basis of domestic judicial acts which the ECHR declared were illegal. Because it has proved impossible to reregister the dissolved community, Jehovah's Witnesses have submitted documents for the registration of another legal entity in Moscow.

59. It is noteworthy that the allegations raised against Jehovah's Witnesses in Taganrog are identical to those brought against the Moscow Community of Jehovah's Witnesses.
60. *Kuznetsov and Others v. Russia*, no. 184/02, 11 January 2007 (see appendix 2). On 16 April 2000, State officials interrupted the peaceful religious service held by the Chelyabinsk community of Jehovah's Witnesses. On 11 January 2007, the ECHR ruled that the authorities' actions violated the European Convention on Human Rights. In spite of the Russian Minister of Interior's commitment to the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to implement this judgment, authorities in Chelyabinsk continue to interfere with the Witnesses' religious meetings.
61. As the Russian Federation is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its first optional protocol, Jehovah's Witnesses are contemplating submitting individual complaints with the CCPR to have alleged violations of the covenant being condemned.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

62. Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia and worldwide organization, express concerns for the impunity with which many serious human rights violations are committed. They respectfully suggest that the Committee (CCPR) makes the following recommendations to the Russian Government to take appropriate measures to bring law, policy and practice in line with the requirements of the ICCPR:
 - (1) Refrain from misapplying the law on extremist activities against the well-known religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses [PACE Resolution 1896 (2012)] and terminate all legal cases and criminal investigations against Jehovah's Witnesses based on extremist charges;
 - (2) Train the local authorities to respect the rights of the members of the legally acknowledged religious organizations and to promote "tolerance in Russian society across the country" (ECRI Report on the Russian Federation of 20 June 2013);
 - (3) Remove religious publications of Jehovah's Witnesses from the Federal List of Extremist Materials;
 - (4) Register the Moscow Community of Jehovah's Witnesses and allow them to peacefully enjoy their worship as guaranteed by the ICCPR;
 - (5) Protect the right of Jehovah's Witnesses to profess their religious beliefs individually or jointly with others as guaranteed by the Russian Constitution and the ICCPR. This includes the right to own and use places of religious worship, as well as rent facilities for religious worship;

- (6) Protect the right of Jehovah's Witnesses to share their religious beliefs with others as guaranteed by the Russian Constitution and the ICCPR,
 - (7) Ensure that law enforcement authorities provide appropriate protection against assaults on Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia and prosecute under the criminal law all who attack them while they peacefully share their religious beliefs with others;
 - (8) Prevent further illegal police interference with Jehovah's Witnesses' peaceful exercise of their freedom of religion and freedom of assembly; and
 - (9) Provide adequate protection for Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses and prosecute under the criminal law all those who vandalize their Kingdom Halls. Abide by their commitment to uphold the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution of Russia and the ICCPR for all citizens, including Jehovah's Witnesses.
63. The EAJCW intends to submit an additional complimentary report with the CCPR. This will be done after the *List of issues to be taken up in connection with the consideration of the seventh report of the Russian Federation (CCPR/C/RUS/7)* is adopted and published.