

Moscow Officials Help Citizens Avoid the 'Moonies,' Other Cults

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The booklets will instruct readers on how to recognize a cult, stressing that "cults do not necessarily take a traditional form, many of them are posing as lectures, personal development courses, or even yoga classes."

The Moscow city legislature plans to release a booklet warning Muscovites against unorthodox religious "cults" operating in Russia, and providing instructions on how to report such organizations to the authorities, the capital's M24 news website reported Monday.

Russia has classified about 80 organizations as "cults," the report said. Those range from domestic movements to transplants from international groups, including the Unification Church, or Moonies, Russia's "God Kuzya" movement, whose leader has been detained on swindling charges, and the Grigory Grabovsky group — whose founder proclaimed himself the second coming of Christ and offered to resuscitate the dead, but was sentenced to prison for swindling.

"Today many people are searching for spiritual calmness, while charlatans, such as the 'God Kuzya' and his likes, are exploiting that," a member of the Moscow City Council committee

for public and religious organizations, Renat Laishev, was quoted by M24 as saying.

The booklets will instruct readers on how to recognize a cult, stressing that "cults do not necessarily take a traditional form, many of them are posing as lectures, personal development courses, or even yoga classes," and will provide instructions on "where to turn to, if a citizen discovers a cult," Laishev was quoted as saying.

The Moscow City Duma may discuss a draft booklet during a session this week, the report said.

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