The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

10 Arrested in St. Petersburg as Police Search Scientology Churches

By The Moscow Times

June 21, 2016



Interior of Moscow Church of Scientology

Ten people were detained Tuesday after police searched the office of St. Petersburg's scientology organization, an unidentified source in law enforcement told the RIA Novosti news agency.

Large-scale searches were carried out Tuesday in the Moscow and St. Petersburg churches of Scientology, another source in law enforcement told the Interfax news agency earlier on Tuesday.

Police officers have blocked the entrance to the Moscow Church of Scientology, located on Taganskaya Ulitsa in the city center and no one is allowed in or out, according to eyewitnesses.

Searches are believed to be connected with a major crackdown on Scientology in Russia and a

criminal case launched against the church over "illegal business activity," Interfax reported.

The Church was unavailable for comment when contacted by The Moscow Times.

In November last year, Moscow City Court ruled in favor of the Russian Justice Ministry that wanted to liquidate an association called the "Moscow Scientology Church," as its religious status contradicts the fact that the term "Scientology" was also registered as a trademark owned by the U.S.-based Religious Technology Center.

In turn, representatives of the Church sent an appeal to Russia's Supreme Court, claiming that its liquidation would violate the rights of believers.

Several illegally installed microphones and cameras were found and withdrawn from Moscow's Church during a search last August.

In 2007, St. Petersburg City Court liquidated the "Center for Scientology" following accusations that it was collecting data about citizens' private lives.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/06/21/10-arrested-in-st-petersburg-as-police-search-scientology-churches-a53368