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Two Moscow Activists Charged With Offending Feelings of Religious Believers

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Russia's Investigative Committee has opened a criminal case for "offending the feelings of religious believers" against two activists who protested the construction of a church in Moscow's Torfyanka park.

According to Oxana Mikhalkina, a lawyer for the church organization "Forty Times Forty," the case was opened against Yevgeniya Lebedeva, the leader of the protest movement, and Marina Verigina, a member of the group.

Thirteen activists in total were detained in the park in northeastern Moscow on Monday morning. Andrei Kormukhin, head of "Forty Times Forty," told the TASS news service that his organization had complained about the group several times.

Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, called the protesters "cultists and pagans."

The conflict over Torfyanka park began in mid-2015. Local residents clashed with church

activists over the proposed construction of a church on the park's territory.

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