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Dane Arrested in Russia for 'Extremist' Jehovah's Witnesses Meeting

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Denis Abramov / YouTube

A Danish national has been arrested in the Russian city of Oryol after attending a meeting of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Dennis Christensen was detained on charges of involvement in an extremist organization on Thursday evening. He is currently being held in pre-trial detention.

Police raided the religious gathering at the city's Kingdom Hall, the Jehovah's Witnesses' official meeting place. Officers then search the homes of those in attendance, a statement released by the group said.

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The Jehovah's Witnesses were banned in the city of Oryol in 2016. Russia's Supreme Court later rolled out that ban across the country April 2017, designating the group an "extremist organization."

Christensen is the first person to be arrested following the ruling. A Jehovah's Witness in Russia's Bashkortostan was also prosecuted for organizing a meeting, but escaped with only a fine.

The raid comes days after a Kingdom Hall in the Russian republic of Komi was targeted by arsonists, the Mediazona website reported.

The remains of a Molotov cocktail were found close to the burnt building in the town of Rzheshart. Fifty Jehovah's Witnesses are estimated to live in the area.

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