

Jehovah's Witnesses Appeal Russia's 'Extremist' Label

September 12, 2017



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The Jehovah's Witnesses have lodged an appeal with Russia's Supreme Court after being added to an "extremist" registry alongside banned terrorist organizations, the court told the Interfax news agency on Tuesday.

Russia's Justice Ministry added the religious group to a registry of banned organizations last month after the Supreme Court ruled in April to formally ban the group.

The judgement [forced](#) 396 registered Jehovah's Witnesses branches across Russia to dissolve.

The Jehovah's Witnesses [said](#) on their website on Monday that the Supreme Court has three months to consider the appeal.

Related article: [Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia Brace for a Final Blow](#)

An annual U.S. report on religious freedom [cited](#) Russia's treatment of the Jehovah's Witnesses among reasons for labeling it a "country of particular concern."

The State Department's report said the Jehovah's Witnesses rights to religious freedom are "eliminated thoroughly, and yet 'legally' under Russian law."

The UN's anti-discrimination panel [called](#) Russia's "extremist" label "vague and broad," lacking clear and precise criteria for legal classification.

Original url:

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