

# Russia Fines Six Israelis for 'Illegal' Religious Activity During Hanukkah in Moscow

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Six Israeli citizens have reportedly been fined in Moscow for illegal religious activity during the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah in December 2017.

A Moscow city court fined the six Israelis for "illegal missionary activity" after police discovered that the group had lit "ritual candles" during the holiday in an office space, the Sova Center, which monitors racism, nationalism and xenophobia, [wrote](#) on Tuesday.

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“Thanks to the support of lawyers, they managed to avoid deportation from Russia and get off with just a fine,” the Sova Center wrote.

The court ruled that the six individuals were affiliated with an organization called Kabbalah Ltd, which has not been registered to engage in missionary activity in Russia, the state-run Moskva news agency reported, citing the court's press center.

Their lawyer Konstantin Andreyev [wrote](#) in a Facebook post that Russian legislation requires religious activities by foreigners to be carried out with the right paperwork.

“You’ll say it’s absurd because Jews don’t engage in missionary work. But law enforcement doesn’t think so and believes that everything religious that a person does is automatically missionary activity,” he wrote.

*A previous version of this article stated that the men were fined because they lit candles. In fact, they were fined for engaging in "illegal missionary activity."*

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