

Jehovah's Witnesses Leader Detained in Siberia — Reports

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Alexander Demianchuk / TASS

A local Jehovah's Witnesses leader was reportedly detained in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk amid an ongoing crackdown on the religious group that has been labeled as extremist in Russia.

Russia [outlawed](#) Jehovah's Witnesses in 2017, equating the country's estimated 175,000 adherents to members of a terrorist group, making it illegal for them to congregate or distribute literature. Last month, investigators [claimed](#) to have seized explosives from members of the religious group in the Volga region of Kirov — a claim that a spokesperson for the group denied.

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Local police reportedly took "measures to prevent extremist manifestations" against a group

of 15 Jehovah's Witnesses in Novosibirsk, according to a police spokesman [cited](#) by Interfax on Monday.

Religious literature, cellphones and electronic data carriers were seized from the group's leader — who was detained and faces criminal charges — deputy police chief Oleg Olenyev was cited as saying.

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