

Activists Compare Russia's Alleged Torture of Jehovah's Witnesses to Nazi Germany

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Lev Ponomaryov **Zurab Dzhavakhadze / TASS**

Russian activists have slammed the recent detentions and alleged torture of Jehovah's Witnesses in Western Siberia, comparing them to persecution by the Nazis.

A spokesperson for the Jehovah's Witnesses, an organization that Russia labeled extremist in 2017, alleged that at least seven adherents of the religious group had been brutally tortured after being detained last week in the Siberian city of Surgut. The spokesperson said that investigators had stripped, suffocated, doused with water and applied stun guns on the believers during an interrogation. Russia's Investigative Committee [denied](#) the claims, saying that investigators did not apply any physical or psychological pressure on the detainees and had acted in accordance with the law.

Related article: [7 Jehovah's Witnesses Brutally Tortured in Russia, Spokesman Says](#)

“Perhaps it makes sense to compare the current situation with the state of the Jehovah’s Witnesses in Nazi Germany,” Lev Ponomaryov, who heads the For Human Rights NGO, [wrote](#) in a blog for the Ekho Moskvy radio station Thursday.

He added that the current persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses is even more brutal than the group’s persecution by the Soviet Union.

Earlier this month, opposition leader Alexei Navalny [compared](#) the police raids against Jehovah’s Witnesses in the region to fascism.

“That’s what Hitler did: shoved the Jehovah’s Witnesses into concentration camps and starved them to death,” he [said](#) on his YouTube channel Feb. 7.

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