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#### 08/02/2010 01:27

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# Moscow officials to evict Jehovah's Witnesses from Moscow estate



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## 18:35 03/02/2010

Officials plan to evict a branch of the Jehovah's Witnesses from an 18th century estate in northern Moscow, the prefect of Moscow's northern district, Oleg Mitvol, said on Wednesday,

Mitvol claimed the Mikhalkovo Estate with nearly 100 hectares was illegally privatized by a Moscow cotton factory and later sold to the Jehovah's Witnesses. The estate is estimated to be worth \$350 million.

"We have been receiving continual complaints from veterans that the historic building on Mikhalkovskaya Street currently houses a branch of the Jehovah's Witnesses," he added.

Russia considers Jehovah's Witnesses a religious sect and its activities therefore illegal. Russia officially recognizes Russian Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism as the main religions of Russia, though other religions also are present.

Officials are hoping to move the organization from the mansion and its land by May 9, and build a community center for the disabled there by 2012.

Legal proceedings are now under way.

MOSCOW, February 3 (RIA Novosti)

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