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## Two Jehovah's Witnesses congregations abolished by courts

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### STARYI OSKOL RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES LIQUIDATED

by Evgeny Filippov

[BelPressa, 10 February 2016](#)

<http://www.belpressa.ru/news/news/staroskolskuyu-religioznuyu-organizaciyu-svidetelej-iegovy-likvidiruyut12001/>

The Belgorod provincial court ruled that the association does not conform to the requirements of the law.

Today the concluding session on the administrative lawsuit of the prosecutor of Belgorod province in defense of the interests of the RF for the liquidation of the Staryi Oskol organization of Jehovah's Witnesses occurred. The court ruled that it does not comply with the requirements of the federal law "On freedom of conscience and religious association."

The organization must be liquidated and removed from the Uniform State Register of Legal Entities. The decision of the court is to take effect immediately.

Lawyers for the defendant did not agree with the decision that was made, and they will appeal it in the judicial college for administrative affairs of the Supreme Court of the RF.

Today the lawsuit of the district prosecutor for finding the Belgorod religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses and its liquidation and removal from the Uniform State Register of Legal Entities will be considered. The result of the session will be learned later.

#### PROVINCIAL COURT BANS ACTIVITY OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ORGANIZATION OF CITY OF BELGOROD

by Evgeny Grebnik

[Komsomolskaia Pravda \(Belgorod\), 11 February 2016](#)

<http://www.bel.kp.ru/online/news/2304125/>

On Thursday, 11 February, the provincial court issued a decision finding the local religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses of the city of Belgorod extremist and not in compliance with the requirements of the federal law "On freedom of conscience and religious associations." By the court's decision, it must be liquidated and removed from the Uniform State Register of Legal Entities. The prosecutor of Belgorod province filed a lawsuit in court in defense of the interests of the Russian federation.

We recall that a day before this, a similar decision was issued with respect to the local religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses of the city of Stary Oskol. The decisions for the cessation of activity of said organizations are to take effect immediately. Within one month they may be appealed in the judicial college for administrative affairs of the Supreme Court of the Russian federation.

#### DECISION TO LIQUIDATE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ORGANIZATIONS REGISTERED IN BELGOROD AND STARY OSKOL MADE ON BASIS OF LAWSUITS OF BELGOROD PROVINCIAL PROSECUTOR

Official website of

[office of prosecutor of Belgorod province, 11 February 2016](#)

<http://www.belproc.ru/news/1507/>

Today, 11 February 2016, an administrative lawsuit by the prosecutor of Belgorod province for finding the local religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses in the city of Belgorod to be extremist and liquidated was granted by decision of the Belgorod provincial court.

Yesterday the provincial court issued a decision on the administrative lawsuit of the provincial prosecutor for liquidation of the local religious organizations of Jehovah's Witnesses in the city of Stary Oskol.

In the trial the prosecutor's office presented to the court evidence containing information about violations committed by the organizations connected with the distribution of materials of extremist contents (promoting the superiority or inferiority of a person on the basis of religious affiliation or attitude toward religion) and other violations for which the federal law "On combating extremist activity" provides accountability.

Eyewitnesses were questioned and documents were examined which gave evidence about encouraging members of the organization to refuse, on the basis of religious motives, medical aid for persons who were in life-threatening condition and about destruction of family and kinship relations on grounds of religious differences.

Also the court established that the said organizations violate the requirement of the federal law "On freedom of conscience and religious associations."

The organizations must be liquidated and removed from the Uniform State Register of Legal Entities. The court announced that the decisions regarding prohibition of the activity of the religious organizations take effect immediately.

DOCTORS IN COURT: "JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DIED AFTER REFUSING BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS"

Moia Reklama, 8 February 2016

<http://www.moyareklama.ru/%D0%91%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B3%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B4/%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8/299437>

In the Belgorod provincial court, medics described the death in Stary Oskol State Hospital of patients who refused blood transfusions. A doctor toxicologist reported how a woman from Stary Oskol was poisoned by mushrooms and forbade doctors to transfuse her blood and she died in torment from necrosis of the liver.

Today, doctors from the Stary Oskol State Hospital, residents of the city whom Jehovahists invited to their meetings, and members themselves of the religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses spoke out in provincial court at a regular session in a case about the liquidation of the Stary Oskol congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

As Moia Reklama has already reported, a case about the liquidation of the Belgorod and Stary Oskol congregations of Jehovahists is now being reviewed by the provincial court. Religious leaders are accused of distributing literature that has been ruled to be extremist. They are also talking in the trial about how their activity negatively impacts family relations and may even lead to the death of adherents. In the brochures that adherents distribute in meetings of said organization there were discovered signs of extremism. The prosecutor of Belgorod province filed in court [a petition?] against the religious leaders, demanding the closing of two branches of the organization.

In the trial Jehovahists were asked what kind of literature was given to them in the meetings and whether they contained calls for religious strife and destruction of the family, and whether they would accept blood transfusion in the event of need. These people answered that such a procedure is prohibited and they would refuse it.

Two doctors were summoned into court as witnesses in order to learn whether religious convictions have affected the state of health of Jehovahist patients and whether they could be the cause of the death of patients.

A toxicologist from the Stary Oskol city hospital described how in 2001 a man and his wife who had been poisoned by toadstools were brought to her department. The husband, who was in critical condition, immediately had a blood transfusion in order to cleanse his organism from toxins. But the woman, who felt better than her spouse, refused hemosorption and plasmapheresis.

"The patient was conscious and she herself signed documents refusing blood transfusion. An attorney visited her and persuaded the Jehovahist not to consent to these medical procedures and he promised to move her to Moscow where there is a hospital with equipment that permits cleansing the organism of poison without blood transfusion. The husband, who is not a member of the congregation, tried to persuade his wife to do everything that the doctors were recommending, but she was unmoved. The lawyer, who promised help, did not visit the next day. The woman was not moved to the capital hospital. In the end, she died from necrosis of the liver.

"At the last moment, the woman nevertheless agreed to one of the procedures, but it was already too late. In principle, members of the congregation could have moved her to the capital by air ambulance, or have brought other equipment into our hospital which permits cleansing the organism without transfusion. But they did not do this, although the lawyer had promised. In our turn, we were not able to do anything, since we treat with the equipment that we have. And in our city hospital it is possible to remove poison from an organism only by means of pumping the stomach and transfusing blood. This incident made a very strong impression on me. After all, I could have helped this woman at the time, but I was not able to. She refused the transfusion and she died in torment, being conscious all the time," the doctor toxicologist related this sad story.

Yet another Stary Oskol medic described the death of a Jehovahist patient after refusing blood transfusion. The man was involved in an accident. Doctors did a serious operation on him, after which he died.

"The patient had more chances to survive if a transfusion had been done on him, but an operation was not done because of extremely low hemoglobin," the doctor concluded.

A man was also questioned in court who had nearly become a member of the congregation. The 33-year-old citizen of Stary Oskol described how he and his spouse were approached on the street by a preacher who offered brochures with articles of religious contents. The man stated that the new acquaintance described to him how it was possible to visit the prohibited website of the Jehovahists to which Roskomnadzor had blocked access. A little bit later the Stary Oskol citizen learned that the literature that the preachers had offered to him had also been declared extremist. His wife reported to the police and described for the guardians of order what had happened.

In his turn, the Jehovahists' attorney Anton Omelchenko asked how long the man had cooperated with the FSB. When the judge overruled the question, noting that it had nothing to do with the case, the lawyer rephrased the same question and tried to get an answer from the man. When the judge forced Omelchenko to stop the talk about the FSB, he suddenly asked the witness what his faith was, stating that his beard gave a sort of hint of his religious confession. The judge again overruled the question and

threatened to remove the lawyer for impertinent questions. The Jehovahists' attorney Alexander Filin behaved more properly and did not pose questions regarding the external appearance of witnesses. The Jehovah's Witnesses' defense tried to insist on the participation in the trial of a religious studies expert, who would be able to describe the activity of the organization as a whole, but the judge rejected the petition, noting that it had nothing to do with the present case.

Jehovists speaking in defense of the congregation also came to the trial. A woman resident of Stary Oskol described how, thanks to this religious organization, she discovered for herself much that was new and was able to improve relations within her family.

"I previously held feminist views and even wanted to divorce my husband, and now I have wholeness in the family. I decided to sacrifice my career and quit work in order to care for the children and be engaged in their upbringing. We have no conflicts with relatives and my parents, who are Orthodox. We care for the children and they study well and are praised in school," the 37-year-old woman declared.

Her husband, confirming that he does not attend Jehovahists' meetings but he supports them, spoke in defense of the congregation and gave assurance that he and his wife live quite remarkably and resolve conflicts in a peaceful way. And their children, although they are forbidden to celebrate birthdays, supposedly live busy lives, play with peers, and attend religious meetings completely voluntarily, where nobody forces them to go, according to the woman.

It should be noted that a large portion of Jehovahists who were summoned to court did not want to talk with the press. Only one of the residents of Oskol, who identified herself as Natalie Emelianenko, agreed to explain why she had come to the session.

"I want to stand up for God. There is nothing bad in our congregation. We live compatibly, although I became a believer and my husband did not. Our family only became stronger from this. As regards blood transfusion, I would not want to do it because they may use contaminated instead of normal blood. And now there are alternative methods of treatment," Natalie declared confidently.

In response to a question what she and her relatives would be able to do in a situation where it was impossible to avoid a transfusion, the woman could not explain and she declined entirely to answer. Her friend Elena (she declined to give her surname) came up to help her. The women began describing together how they had joined the religious organization and became Jehovahists, but they did not answer inconvenient questions. The citizens of Oskol declared that they had spoken in the trial and hoped that they could be able to save the congregation from liquidation.

How many more sessions in the case of the liquidation of the Belgorod and Stary Oskol congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses there will be is still not known. Two sessions are scheduled for this week in provincial court at which several more witnesses are supposed to speak for each side. It is quite possible that a decision in the case for liquidation of the Belgorod Jehovahist congregation will be made on 11 February.

BELGOROD JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES APPEAL DECISION ON LIQUIDATION OF TWO  
RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN THE RUSSIAN SUPREME COURT

[Portal-credo.ru, 11 February 2016](#)

<http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=118396>

The decision on the cessation of the activity of the organizations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Belgorod province has not taken effect, but until the final verdict of the Russian Supreme Court, their activity must be suspended. At the same time, this decision does not signify a ban on the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses in Belgorod and Sary Oskol, the press service of the Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia reported on 11 February.

Yesterday, 10 February, the Belgorod provincial court issued a decision for the liquidation of the local religious organization of JW in the city of Sary Oskol, which at the time of liquidation had 11 members. On 11 February, a similar decision was issued regarding the local religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses of the city of Belgorod. The court ignored the position of the European Court for Human Rights, stated in a ruling of 10 June 2010 in the case "Religious society of Jehovah's Witnesses in the city of Moscow, et al. v. the Russian federation."

The Administrative Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia expresses its worry that 11 Jehovah's Witnesses from Sary Oskol and 11 of their fellow believers from Belgorod have been subjected to religious discrimination. The court effectively has not permitted them to present evidence testifying to the contrived nature of the accusations advanced by the prosecutor.

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