

# URGENT ACTION

## DANISH JEHOVAH'S WITNESS DENIED JUSTICE

The sentence against Danish Jehovah's Witness Dennis Christensen was upheld on 23 May. After that he was transported to the correctional penal colony No 3 in Kursk region, some 200 km away from Orel, the city in western Russia where he lived with his wife. Dennis Christensen is a prisoner of conscience, serving six years in prison for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of religion.

**NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.**

**Dennis Christensen** is a Danish national who has been living in Russia for more than 20 years. He became the first Jehovah's Witness to be detained following a decision by Russia's Supreme Court to ban the religious organisation in April 2017. On 6 February 2019, the Zheleznodorzhnyi District Court in Orel found Dennis Christensen guilty of "organizing activities of an extremist organization" (Article 282.2 (1) of the Russian Criminal Code) and sentenced him to six years in prison. According to the prosecution, he was organizing local worship by Jehovah's Witnesses, and as evidence of his "crime" he was collecting donations and organizing cleaning of the venue used by the worshipers. On 23 May, the Orel Regional Court upheld the sentence and he was then transported to correctional penal colony No 3 in Kursk region, some 200 km away from his home in Orel.

According to the data provided by the Jehovah's Witnesses organization, since Dennis Christensen's conviction on 6 February, the repressions against its members in Russia has intensified. As of 31 July, 587 searches have been conducted in the houses of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia. Criminal proceedings have been opened against at least 241 Jehovah's Witnesses under "extremism" charges, and at least 129 individuals placed in custody. Dozens of men and at least six women were remanded in custody as of 31 July, and 27 people were under house arrest.

The right to freedom of religion is enshrined both in the Russian Constitution and in international human rights treaties to which Russia is a state party. By prosecuting Dennis Christensen, as well as other Jehovah's Witnesses, Russia violates its human rights obligations. Dennis Christensen is a prisoner of conscience, deprived of his liberty solely for exercising his right to freedom of religion.

We will continue monitoring and supporting Jehovah's Witnesses who are facing persecution in Russia.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Dennis Christensen (he/his)

**THIS IS THE FIRST AND FINAL UPDATE FOR UA 19/19**

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/9846/2019/en/>

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