

# News story: Minister for Human Rights statement on Russian Supreme Court ruling

On 17 July 2017 Russia's Supreme Court rejected an appeal lodged by the Administrative Centre of the Russian branch of Jehovah's Witnesses against the Supreme Court decision of 20 April which had upheld a ruling categorising them as "extremists". The Russian government have made commitments to freedom of religion in international fora, including in the Council of Europe.

Following this decision, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for Human Rights, said:

We are deeply concerned by the decision of Russia's Supreme Court to reject the appeal of the Jehovah's Witnesses against their labelling as "extremists".

This ruling confirms the criminalisation of the peaceful worship of 175,000 Russian citizens and contravenes the right to religious freedom that is enshrined in the Russian Constitution.

The British government continues to call upon the Russian government to uphold its international commitment to this basic freedom.

## **Further information**