

Statement on the ban of the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia

Yesterday's decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation to ban the activities of the Administrative Centre of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia on grounds of "extremism" could make it possible to launch criminal prosecutions against Jehovah's Witnesses for mere acts of worship.

Jehovah's Witnesses, like all other religious groups, must be able to peacefully enjoy freedom of assembly without interference, as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation as well as by Russia's international commitments and international human rights standards.

The European Union continues to promote freedom of religion or belief as a right to be exercised by everyone everywhere, based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination and universality.