

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

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Ban on literature of Jehovah's Witnesses disturbing to Russian expert

MOSCOW—In the latest phase of the ongoing five-year civil trial to ban Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow, the Court listened to the testimony of one of its own appointed experts, Professor Anatoly Nikolayevich Baranov of the Vinogradov Russian Language Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences. When asked by defense counsel what he would think of a ban on the literature of Jehovah's Witnesses, Baranov stated that he would find it disturbing both as a linguist and as an ordinary citizen. Yesterday, Eileen Barker, Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics, testified that Jehovah's Witnesses are a well-established religion and that they freely practice their religion throughout Europe. She stated that so-called anticult experts, often the driving force behind calls for banning minority religious groups, base their actions on ideological grounds. Their sentiments follow the thinking, 'We have the right religion, therefore theirs must be wrong, and so they must be banned.' On Tuesday, February 24, 2004, the court will hear the second of its three appointed experts.

For more information on this trial, see the following links:

[European Court of Human Rights](#)

[Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#)

[U.S. State Department International Religious Freedom Report 2003](#)

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