

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

R u s s i a

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Banning Jehovah's Witnesses will only help their activity, says expert

MOSCOW—On Wednesday, March 3, 2004, final witnesses testified in the trial to ban Jehovah's Witnesses in Moscow. Professor Nikolai Vitalyevich Shaburov of the Center of Religious Studies of the Russian State University, an expert on religions, characterized Jehovah's Witnesses as a Christian group whose zealous preaching activity is carried out in obedience to Christ's command to preach and make disciples. Professor Shaburov stated that the ban sought by the prosecutor in order to hinder Jehovah's Witnesses would actually only help them in their preaching activity.

Appearing as the final witness was a former Moscow regional deputy, Vadim Iosafovich Dedyanin, whose wife and two sons are Jehovah's Witnesses. He testified that their religious beliefs, although different from his own, in no way interfere with their family life and have only contributed to his sons growing up to be normal, contemporary people with knowledge on a wide range of subjects.

Final oral reading of testimony was presented on March 4 and 5 and is scheduled to continue when the trial resumes on Wednesday, March 10, 2004. Final arguments are expected to be heard when the oral reading is concluded.

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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