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THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF
JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM SUBCOMMITTEE

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN RUSSIA

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Statement for the OSCE
Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
1-2 April 2019, Vienna

Contact address: Rue d'Argile 60, 1950 Kraainem (Brussels), Belgium
Tel.: ++ 32-2-782 00 15 - Fax: ++ 32-2-782 05 92 - E-mail: JWitnesses@be.jw.org

IBSA HOUSE | THE RIDGEWAY | LONDON NW7 1RN | UNITED KINGDOM
TELEPHONE: 020 8906 2211 (+ 44 20 8906 2211)

OFFICES IN: AUSTRIA BELGIUM FRANCE GEORGIA GERMANY GREECE ITALY POLAND RUSSIA SPAIN SWITZERLAND

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THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF
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Torture of Jehovah's Witnesses in Surgut

At least seven of Jehovah's Witnesses were subjected to torture—electric shocks, suffocation, and cruel beatings—on the first floor of the Russian Investigative Committee's building at ul.

Ostrovskogo, d. 47, in Surgut. While these persons were being tortured, their interrogators continued to interrogate them, demanding to know: "Where are meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses held? Who attends the meetings? What are the elders' last names? What is your mobile phone password?"

On February 15, 2019, mass searches in Surgut started in the early morning hours. Worshipers were taken to the Investigative Committee offices. Investigators began interrogating the Witnesses, who refused to disclose details about their fellow worshippers. After the only legal representative in the room left, victims report that the following occurred: agents put a bag over the victims' heads, sealed it with tape, tied their hands behind their backs, and beat them. Then, after stripping the Witnesses naked and dousing them with water, the agents shocked them with stun guns. This sadistic torture lasted for about two hours.

Two Witnesses are still behind bars.

Additionally, after the mass searches were completed, the Russian authorities initiated criminal cases against a total of 19 Witnesses for so-called "organizing an extremist organization."

Those who have been released have had their injuries documented by medical professionals and have filed complaints with supervisory agencies.

The Witnesses will pursue all available legal remedies for this crime, since such an egregious abuse of authority is punishable under the Russian Criminal Code. Additionally, The Russian Federation is subject to several international bodies that protect individuals from torture.

Case of Loginov and Others in Surgut

Region:

Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area

Locality: Surgut

Case number: 11902711017027628

Current stage: preliminary investigation (pre-trial proceedings)

Suspected of: delivering speeches, engaging in the Witnesses' public preaching activity with local members, meeting with Bible education volunteers and appointed congregation assistants, and having as one objective the organizing of appointed men in the Vzlyotnove Congregation

Article of the Russian Criminal Code: 282.2 (1), 282.2 (2)

Case initiated: 11 February 2019

Investigating: Investigative Department of the city of Surgut of the Investigative Directorate of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation for the Khanty-Mansi Region