



EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

THIRD SECTION

CASE OF MARKIN AND OTHERS v. RUSSIA

*(Applications nos. 20519/18 and 13 others –
see appended list)*

JUDGMENT

STRASBOURG

16 October 2025

This judgment is final but it may be subject to editorial revision.

In the case of Markin and Others v. Russia,

The European Court of Human Rights (Third Section), sitting as a Committee composed of:

Diana Kovatcheva, *President*,

Canòlic Mingorance Cairat,

Vasilka Sancin, *judges*,

and Viktoriya Maradudina, *Acting Deputy Section Registrar*,

Having deliberated in private on 25 September 2025,

Delivers the following judgment, which was adopted on that date:

PROCEDURE

1. The case originated in applications against Russia lodged with the Court under Article 34 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (“the Convention”) on the various dates indicated in the appended table.

2. The applicants were represented by P. Muzny, a lawyer practising in Geneva.

3. The Russian Government (“the Government”) were given notice of the applications.

4. The Government of Poland were granted leave to intervene by the President of the Section in respect of application no. 19539/19 in so far as it concerned Mr A. Oniszcuk.

THE FACTS

5. The list of applicants and the relevant details of the applications are set out in the appended table.

6. The applicants complained that their prosecution on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of liquidated local religious organisations of Jehovah’s Witnesses by organising services of worship and peacefully practicing their religion in community with others had violated their rights to freedom of religion and association. Some applicants also raised other complaints under the provisions of the Convention.

THE LAW

I. JOINDER OF THE APPLICATIONS

7. Having regard to the similar subject matter of the applications, the Court finds it appropriate to examine them jointly in a single judgment.

II. JURISDICTION

8. The Court observes, with regard to applications nos. 53357/20 and 53767/20, where domestic decisions were rendered by courts in Crimea, that the Russian Federation has exercised jurisdiction over Crimea at least since 18 March 2014 (see *Ukraine v. Russia (re Crimea)* (dec.) [GC], nos. 20958/14 and 38334/18, §§ 338-349, 16 December 2020 and *Ukraine v. Russia (re Crimea)* [GC], nos. 20958/14 and 38334/18, § 873, 25 June 2024). Accordingly, the events these applicants complained of fall within the “jurisdiction” of the respondent Government and the Court has competence to examine them.

9. The Court further observes that the facts giving rise to the alleged violations of the Convention occurred or began prior to 16 September 2022, the date on which the Russian Federation ceased to be a party to the Convention. The Court therefore decides that it has jurisdiction to examine the present applications (see *Fedotova and Others v. Russia* [GC], nos. 40792/10 and 2 others, §§ 68-73, 17 January 2023; and *Pivkina and Others v. Russia* (dec.), nos. 2134/23 and 6 others, §§ 46, 73-81, 6 June 2023).

III. ALLEGED VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION

10. The applicants complained principally of their prosecution on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of liquidated local religious organisations of Jehovah’s Witnesses by organising services of worship and peacefully practicing their religion in community with others. They relied on Article 9 of the Convention.

11. The Court observes that in the leading case of *Taganrog LRO and Others v. Russia*, nos. 32401/10 and 19 others, §§ 256-73, 7 June 2022, it has already found a violation of Article 9 of the Convention in respect of issues similar to those in the present case. The Court held, in particular, that since the authorities failed to demonstrate that the applicants were involved in any socially dangerous activities of an extremist nature, their prosecution and conviction for peacefully practising the religion of Jehovah’s Witnesses in community with others had been based on the impermissibly broad formulation and application of the extremism legislation and also did not pursue any legitimate aim or “pressing social need”.

12. Having examined all the material submitted to it, the Court has not found any fact or argument capable of persuading it to reach a different conclusion on the admissibility and merits of these complaints.

13. These complaints are therefore admissible and disclose a breach of Article 9 of the Convention on account of the criminal prosecution of the applicants.

IV. OTHER ALLEGED VIOLATIONS UNDER WELL-ESTABLISHED CASE-LAW

14. Some applicants submitted other complaints which also raised issues under the Convention, given the relevant well-established case-law of the Court (see appended table). These complaints are not manifestly ill-founded within the meaning of Article 35 § 3 (a) of the Convention, nor are they inadmissible on any other ground. Accordingly, they must be declared admissible.

15. Having examined all the material before it, the Court concludes that they also disclose violations of the Convention in the light of its findings in *Taganrog LRO and Others*, cited above, concerning the unlawfulness and unreasonableness of the pre-trial detention within the criminal procedure tainted with arbitrariness as a whole, and *Misan v. Russia*, no. 4261/04, 2 October 2014, concerning a search of the applicant's home conducted in the absence of safeguards.

V. REMAINING COMPLAINTS

16. Some applicants also raised other complaints under various Articles of the Convention. The Court has examined the applications and considers that, in the light of all the material in its possession and in so far as the matters complained of are within its competence, these complaints either do not meet the admissibility criteria set out in Articles 34 and 35 of the Convention and must therefore be rejected in accordance with Article 35 § 4 of the Convention, or do not require separate examination in view of the Court's findings in paragraphs 12-13 and 15 above.

VI. APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 41 OF THE CONVENTION

17. Regard being had to the documents in its possession and to its case-law (see, in particular, *Taganrog LRO and Others*, cited above, § 300), the Court considers it reasonable to award the sums indicated in the appended table and dismisses the remainder of the applicants' claims for just satisfaction.

FOR THESE REASONS, THE COURT, UNANIMOUSLY,

1. *Decides* to join the applications;
2. *Holds* that it has jurisdiction to deal with these applications;
3. *Declares* the complaints concerning the applicants' prosecution on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of liquidated local

religious organisations of Jehovah's Witnesses by organising services of worship and peacefully practicing their religion in community with others and the other complaints under the well-established case-law of the Court, as set out in the appended table, admissible, and *decides* that the remaining complaints are either inadmissible or that it is not necessary to examine them separately;

4. *Holds* that these applications disclose a breach of Article 9 of the Convention;
5. *Holds* that there has been a violation of the Convention as regards the other complaints raised under the well-established case-law of the Court (see appended table);
6. *Holds*
 - (a) that the respondent State is to pay the applicants, within three months, the amounts indicated in the appended table, to be converted into the currency of the respondent State at the rate applicable at the date of settlement;
 - (b) that from the expiry of the above-mentioned three months until settlement simple interest shall be payable on the above amounts at a rate equal to the marginal lending rate of the European Central Bank during the default period plus three percentage points.*Dismisses* the remainder of the applicants' claims for just satisfaction.

Done in English, and notified in writing on 16 October 2025, pursuant to Rule 77 §§ 2 and 3 of the Rules of Court.

Viktoriya Maradudina
Acting Deputy Registrar

Diana Kovatcheva
President

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APPENDIX

List of applications raising complaints under Article 9 of the Convention
(prohibition of the religious organisation of Jehovah's Witnesses for extremism, and criminal prosecution of its followers)

No.	Application no. Date of introduction	Applicant's name Year of birth	Representative's name and location	Substance of the complaint	Final domestic decision Court name Date	Other complaints under well-established case- law	Amount awarded for pecuniary damage (in euros) ¹	Amount awarded for non-pecuniary damage (in euros) ²
1.	20519/18 03/05/2018	Roman Nikolayevich MARKIN 1974 Viktor Fedorovich TROFIMOV 1957	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated local religious organisation (LRO) of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Murmansk Region ("Polyarnyy") by holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses, sharing their beliefs with others and providing religious publications of Jehovah's Witnesses to adherents	Third Cassation Court, 16/12/2021 (applicants sentenced to fines in the amount of RUB 300,000 and 350,000, respectively)	Art. 5 (1) - Unlawful detention - detention order by the Polyarnyy District Court of the Murmansk Region of 23/04/2018, no reference to any evidence proving the existence of a reasonable suspicion of the applicants' having committed a crime; appeals rejected by the Murmansk Regional Court on 30/04/2018 (in respect of the second applicant) and 07/05/2018 (in respect of the first applicant), Art. 5 (3) - Lack of relevant and sufficient reasons for detention - pre-trial detention extended on 08/06/2018 by the Polyarnyy District Court of the Murmansk Region; no indication of specific evidence demonstrating the need for continued detention; upheld on appeal by the Murmansk Regional Court on 25/06/2018 (in respect of the first applicant) and 05/07/2018 (in respect of the second applicant); on 10/10/2018 the District Court replaced the custodial measure with house arrest; it further extended this measure on 07/12/2018; upheld on appeal by the Regional Court on 28/12/2018; the applicants were released on 07/02/2019 under recognisance agreement	3,000, to Mr Markin and 3,500, to Mr Trofimov	15,000, to each applicant

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No.	Application no. Date of introduction	Applicant's name Year of birth	Representative's name and location	Substance of the complaint	Final domestic decision Court name Date	Other complaints under well-established case-law	Amount awarded for pecuniary damage (in euros) ¹	Amount awarded for non-pecuniary damage (in euros) ²
2.	42412/18 04/09/2018 (4 applicants)	Ivan Grigoryevich PUYDA 1978 Konstantin Nikolayevich PETROV 1986 Sergey Liviyeovich YERKIN 1953 Yevgeniy Anatolyevich ZYABLOV 1977	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction of the applicants on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Magadan by holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses and sharing their beliefs with others	Magadan City Court, 06/03/2024 (applicants convicted at first instance and sentenced to conditional prison sentences ranging from five to seven years), no information provided as to the outcome of the appeal proceedings	Art. 5 (1) - Unlawful detention - detention orders by the Zheleznodorozhnyy District Court of Khabarovsk of 01/06/2018, no reference to any evidence proving the existence of a reasonable suspicion of the applicants' having committed a crime; appeals rejected by the Khabarovsk Regional Court on 09/06/2018 and by the Magadan Regional Court on 14/06/2018, Art. 5 (3) - Lack of relevant and sufficient reasons for detention - pre-trial detention extended on 25/07/2018 by the Magadan City Court; no indication of specific evidence demonstrating the need for continued detention; on 03/08/2018 the Magadan Regional Court upheld the extension orders in respect of applicants 1, 3 and 4; the custodial measure in respect of applicant 2 was changed to house arrest, Art. 8 (1) – Unlawful search - home search and seizure of the applicants' belongings; search warrants issued by an investigator on 30/05/2018; scope of the search – "[electronic devices], religious literature, diaries with notes on meetings, copies of documents confirming the connection of Jehovah's Witnesses with the parent structure, printed correspondence on religious issues, powers of attorney, copies of financial statements, crime weapons, other items and documents carrying the traces of criminal activity"; carried out on 30/05/2018; Magadan Regional Court rejected the appeal complaints on 18/07/2018	-	15,000 to each applicant

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No.	Application no. Date of introduction	Applicant's name Year of birth	Representative's name and location	Substance of the complaint	Final domestic decision Court name Date	Other complaints under well-established case- law	Amount awarded for pecuniary damage (in euros) ¹	Amount awarded for non-pecuniary damage (in euros) ²
3.	52867/18 01/11/2018	Sergey Alekseyevich BRITVIN 1965 Vadim Anatolyevich LEVCHUK 1972	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses "Berezovskiy" by holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses	Kemerovo Regional Court, 19/01/2021 (applicants convicted to four years' imprisonment; released on 30/12/2020 after having served the sentence)	Art. 5 (1) - Unlawful detention - detention order by the Tsentralnyy District Court of Kemerovo of 24/07/2018, no reference to any evidence proving the existence of a reasonable suspicion of the applicants' having committed a crime; appeals rejected by the Kemerovo Regional Court on 10/08/2018, Art. 5 (3) - Lack of relevant and sufficient reasons for detention - pre-trial detention extended on 17/09/2018 by the Tsentralnyy District Court of Kemerovo; no indication of specific evidence demonstrating the need for continued detention, upheld on appeal by the Kemerovo Regional Court on 10/10/2018 and 18/10/2018, Art. 8 (1) – Unlawful search - home search and seizure of the applicants' belongings; authorised on 20/07/2018 by the Tsentralnyy District Court of Kemerovo; scope of the search – “objects, documents and electronic media indicative of the continuation of the activity of the liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses “Berezovskiy””; carried out on 22/07/2018; Kemerovo Regional Court rejected the appeal complaints on 13/09/2018 and 20/09/2018	-	15,000 to each applicant
4.	5724/19 22/01/2019	Nataliya Igorevna SOROKINA 1975 Mariya Vladimirovna TROSHINA	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction of the applicants on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of	Smolensk Regional Court, 15/09/2021 (applicants convicted to conditional sentence of six	Art. 5 (1) - Unlawful detention - detention order by the Leninskiy District Court of Smolensk of 09/10/2018, no reference to any evidence proving the existence of a reasonable suspicion of the applicants' having committed a crime; appeals rejected by the Smolensk Regional Court on 19/10/2018 and 22/10/2018,		15,000 to each applicant

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No.	Application no. Date of introduction	Applicant's name Year of birth	Representative's name and location	Substance of the complaint	Final domestic decision Court name Date	Other complaints under well-established case- law	Amount awarded for pecuniary damage (in euros) ¹	Amount awarded for non-pecuniary damage (in euros) ²
		1977		Jehovah's Witnesses in Smolensk by participating in religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses by video link and sharing their beliefs with others	years' imprisonment)	Art. 5 (3) - Lack of relevant and sufficient reasons for detention - pre-trial detention extended on 16/11/2018 by the Leninskiy District Court of Smolensk; no indication of specific evidence demonstrating the need for continued detention, upheld on appeal by the Smolensk Regional Court on 30/11/2018 and 07/12/2018		
5.	19539/19 02/04/2019 (5 applicants)	Andrzej ONISZCZUK 1968 Maksim Valeryevich KHALTURIN 1974 Vladimir Aleksandrovich KOROBAYNIKOV 1952 Andrey Sergeyevich SUVORKOV 1993 Yevgeniy Anatolyevich SUVORKOV 1978	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction of the applicants on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kirov by holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses, sharing their beliefs with others and studying religious publications of Jehovah's Witnesses	Kirov Regional Court, 04/10/2022 (applicants convicted to prison sentences ranging from three years and three months to six years and six months)	Art. 5 (1) - Unlawful detention - detention orders by the Pervomayskiy District Court of Kirov of 11/10/2018 and 12/10/2018, no reference to any evidence proving the existence of a reasonable suspicion of the applicants' having committed a crime; appeals rejected by the Kirov Regional Court on 23/10/2018, Art. 5 (3) - Lack of relevant and sufficient reasons for detention - pre-trial detention extended on 30/11/2018 by the Pervomayskiy District Court of Kirov; no indication of specific evidence demonstrating the need for continued detention, upheld on appeal by the Kirov Regional Court on 20/12/2018 in respect of all applicants except for Mr Korobaynikov, whose preventive measure was changed to house arrest (which was subsequently extended on 30/01/2019); on 31/01/2019 the Pervomayskiy District Court further extended the custodial measure in respect of Mr Oniszczuk and Mr Ye. Suvorkov and changed Mr Khalturin's and Mr A. Suvorkov's preventive detention to house arrest; upheld on appeal by the Kirov Regional Court on 14/02/2019		15,000 to each applicant

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No.	Application no. Date of introduction	Applicant's name Year of birth	Representative's name and location	Substance of the complaint	Final domestic decision Court name Date	Other complaints under well-established case- law	Amount awarded for pecuniary damage (in euros) ¹	Amount awarded for non-pecuniary damage (in euros) ²
6.	53503/19 09/10/2019	Sergey Vladimirovich SKRYNNIKOV 1962	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Oryol by giving a religious sermon at a religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses	Orel Regional Court, 13/06/2019 (applicant sentenced to a fine in the amount of EUR 350,000)		3,500	15,000
7.	51125/20 18/11/2020	Igor Nikolayevich IVASHIN 1976	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Lensk, Republic of Yakutia, by holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses and studying religious publications of Jehovah's Witnesses	Ninth Cassation Court, 13/09/2021 (applicant convicted to conditional sentence of six years' imprisonment)		-	15,000
8.	53357/20 25/11/2020	Sergey Viktorovich FILATOV 1972	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Sivash, Crimea, by holding religious	Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, 24/08/2021 (applicant sentenced to six years' imprisonment)		-	15,000

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No.	Application no. Date of introduction	Applicant's name Year of birth	Representative's name and location	Substance of the complaint	Final domestic decision Court name Date	Other complaints under well-established case- law	Amount awarded for pecuniary damage (in euros) ¹	Amount awarded for non-pecuniary damage (in euros) ²
				services of Jehovah's Witnesses at his home				
9.	53767/20 02/12/2020	Artem Vyacheslavovich GERASIMOV 1985	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Yalta, Crimea, by holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses	Fourth Cassation Court, 20/10/2021 (the applicant was convicted to six years' imprisonment")		-	15,000
10.	2433/21 28/12/2020	Nikolay Yuryevich POLEVODOV 1970 Stanislav Viktorovich KIM 1968	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Khabarovsk by holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses, sharing beliefs with others and studying religious publications of Jehovah's Witnesses	Ninth Cassation Court, 30/08/2021 (applicants convicted to conditional sentence of two years)		-	15,000 to each applicant
11.	16437/21 15/03/2021 (3 applicants)	Vladimir Aleksandrovich ALUSHKIN 1964 Tatyana Sergeyevna ALUSHKINA 1963	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Penza (Arbekovo) by	First Cassation Court, 09/12/2021 (applicants sentenced to two to four years' imprisonment)		-	15,000 to each applicant

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No.	Application no. Date of introduction	Applicant's name Year of birth	Representative's name and location	Substance of the complaint	Final domestic decision Court name Date	Other complaints under well-established case- law	Amount awarded for pecuniary damage (in euros) ¹	Amount awarded for non-pecuniary damage (in euros) ²
		Galiya Anvarovna OLKHOVA 1970		holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses, singing biblical songs and studying religious literature of Jehovah's Witnesses				
12.	31747/21 14/06/2021	Yuriy Prokopyevich SAVELYEV 1954	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Novosibirsk (Zarechnaya) despite the decision of the Russian Federation Supreme Court declaring it an extremist organisation, holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses at his home, teaching on the basis of the training program of Jehovah's Witnesses, using the book New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures declared extremist.	Eighth Cassation Court, 10/08/2022 (applicant convicted to six years' imprisonment)		-	15,000
13.	3673/22 06/01/2022	Aleksandr Yevgenyevich IVSHIN 1957	Muzny Petr Thun	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction on charges of extremism for pursuing	Supreme Court of Russia, 23/05/2022 (applicant			15,000

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				the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Abinsk despite the decision of the Russian Federation Supreme Court declaring it an extremist organisation and holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses by video link with joint singing of biblical songs	convicted to seven years and six months' imprisonment)			
14.	14662/22 25/02/2022	Roman Lyubomirovich BARANOVSKIY 1974 Valentina Ivanovna BARANOVSKAYA 1951	Muzny Petr Geneva	Arbitrary criminal prosecution and conviction on charges of extremism for pursuing the activities of a liquidated LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in Abakan ("Yuzhnaya Abakan") by holding religious services of Jehovah's Witnesses	Supreme Court of Russia, 31/01/2022 (applicants convicted to six years' and two years' imprisonment, respectively)			15,000 to each applicant

¹ Plus any tax that may be chargeable to the applicants.

² Plus any tax that may be chargeable to the applicants.