

Russia to Prosecute Missionary Under Controversial Anti-Terrorism Laws

Russian authorities arrested a Ukrainian missionary under their controversial anti-terrorism laws, according to the *Moscow Times*.

Police arrested Sergei Zhuravlyov while he was preaching in a St. Petersburg Messianic congregation and charged him with spreading hate speech and maintaining ties to an illegal organization.

The arrest comes just weeks after the former Communist country implemented several harsh edicts, which many believed to be “anti-missionary.”

“Russia is closing down in an awful way. The new law is in total conflict with the purpose and the task given to the church by the Lord. The law will send the church back into Soviet era Communist persecution,” Great Commission Ministries Chairman Hanny Haukka says.

Other Christians, however, says the new laws are misunderstood.

Much of the law addresses issues of electronic surveillance and storage of phone records as a counterterrorism measure rather than specific missionary activities.

“A church is not forbidden to conduct missionary activity under this law but it does need to be a legal, registered church—not underground like some from the Soviet era,” says former pastor and Russian church planter Sergey

Achkasov. "The law is a last-ditch effort to get churches registered and to prevent large-group gatherings where the potential for terrorism exists."

Zhuravlyov has now been released on bond and his case has been sent to court.