



NETWORKING THE BAPTIST FAMILY TO IMPACT THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

BWA General Council Resolution 2017.2

### **Resolution on Religious Freedom in Russia**

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, July 5-7, 2017:

REAFFIRMS our historic Baptist commitment to religious freedom as a gift of God to all people, regardless of denomination or religion; and that this same commitment is enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18, to which the Russian Federation is a signatory;

NOTES with great concern the passage of recent legislation that restricts evangelism and missionary work by minority faiths, which has led to a deterioration of religious freedom in Russia;

REGRETS the application of this law to make Jehovah's Witnesses illegal as a religious denomination, labelling it as an "extremist group" and seeking to criminalize its worship;

NOTES with concern that fellow Baptists and other Christian believers in Russia have been arrested and fined during the past year due to the new laws curtailing religious liberty;

COMMENDS the response of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists for standing for the principle of religious freedom for everyone, even for those with whom they have deep differences, such as Jehovah's Witnesses; and for having expressed to President Putin its "profound concern" at this violation "of freedom of conscience of tens of thousands of citizens of the Russian Federation who confess the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses";

URGES the president, government and judiciary of the Russian Federation to restore the religious rights of all people, especially the Jehovah's Witnesses, at the forthcoming Appeal of their being declared an illegal organization;

AFFIRMS the rights of all religious groups in Russia, especially religious minorities, to legally exist and to worship in freedom, as provided for in the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the United Nations Declarations on Human Rights, Article 18.

## Keywords

BWA; Human Rights; Religious Intolerance; Religious Freedom; Russia; United Nations.

## Citations

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*Since its formation in 1905, the Baptist World Alliance has networked the global Baptist family to impact the world for Christ with a commitment to strengthen worship, fellowship and unity; lead in mission and evangelism; respond to people in need through aid, relief, and community development; defend religious freedom, human rights, and justice; and advance theological reflection and leadership development.*