

Foreign Ministry Rejects U.S. Ruling on Jewish Library

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The  **Moscow Times**

The Foreign Ministry has rejected a U.S. court ruling to turn over a Jewish library to a Hasidic group in New York as illegal.

A U.S. judge last week ruled against the Russian government for its refusal to return thousands of manuscripts that once belonged to a Chabad-Lubavitch rabbi. The library was seized by the Red Army in Nazi Germany as war booty.

The Foreign Ministry said late Wednesday that the ruling is a "rude violation" of international law.

It said the library was nationalized because its owner, Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneersohn, had no heirs. Schneersohn was forced to leave Russia in 1927.

"On the contrary, it is American Hasids who must return to Russia seven books from the same collection that they borrowed from the Russian State Library in 1994 through the U.S. Congress library for two months and have withheld illegally for 16 years," the ministry said in

a statement on its web site.

The ministry also said the Schneersohn library was available for scientific study and worship.

Chabad-Lubavitch said it feared that some manuscripts were headed to the black market.

(AP, MT)

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