

Russia Charges Ukrainian Religious Leader Under Controversial Anti-Terror Law

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The  **Moscow Times**

Russia has brought an administrative case against a religious leader under the country's controversial new package of anti-terrorist laws.

Sergei Zhuravlyov, a representative of the Ukrainian Reformed Orthodox Church of Christ the Savior, stands accused of spreading hate speech and maintaining ties to an illegal organization.

According to an Aug. 27 blog post by Zhuravlyov, he was arrested while preaching before the St. Petersburg Messianic Jewish community and accused of violating a provision of Russian anti-terrorist legislation that bans illegal missionary activity.

A law enforcement official quoted by the Interfax news agency claimed that Zhuravlyov was fomenting negative attitudes toward the Russian Orthodox Church and that he maintains ties with individuals connected to the Ukrainian nationalist political party "Right Sector," which

is banned in the Russian Federation.

Zhuravlyov was released on bail, and the case was sent to court.

The anti-terrorist laws were proposed by conservative lawmaker Irina Yarovaya of the Duma Committee for Security and supported by Viktor Ozerov, chairman of the Federation Council Committee on Defense. President Vladimir Putin signed the package into law on July 7.

Critics charge that the laws aggressively expand state power and undermine the Russian Constitution.

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