

Brazilian 'Old Believer' Faces Deportation After 20 Years in Siberian Taiga

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Olga Suvorova / Facebook

A Brazilian-born Orthodox Christian Old Believer with a Russian wife and kids faces deportation after being brought to the country as a child 20 years ago, Siberian police and activists have said.

Russia's Old Believers split from the Orthodox Church in 1666 after protesting against the reforms of Patriarch Nikon of Moscow. Old Believer communities are found throughout the world, including in the remote forests of the Siberian Taiga, where many fled Stalinist repression during the Soviet era.

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A Brazilian Old Believer [told](#) a Krasnoyarsk region activist on Facebook last Wednesday that he had been summoned from a distant village on Yenisei River, population 60, to face

deportation. He said he was brought to Siberia by his Old Believer mother at age 12 in 1999, where he got married in 2011 and had three children.

The investigative Novaya Gazeta newspaper [reported](#) Wednesday that local authorities had declined to register the marriage because the Brazilian said his passport had been burned in a monastery fire in 2006. A court deemed him single and ruled to deport him back to Brazil, it reported.

“All his adult life, he considered Russia his native country. Now he has nowhere to go,” activist Olga Suvorova [wrote](#).

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Police [told](#) the TASS news agency that the Brazilian Old Believer, whose Cyrillic name is Khanofér Yefimoff di Keiros, had been instructed several times to obtain Russian citizenship.

Suvorova said they had appealed the deportation ruling. The Brazilian’s wife and three children have taken the year’s last ferry from their isolated village to Krasnoyarsk for DNA tests to prove their kinship, she told TASS.

“I don’t have connections with my very distant relatives [in Brazil] and I don’t even want to go back,” the Old Believer told Suvorova in a Facebook video from the detention center.

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