

SEIZURE OF KINGDOM HALLS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN THE DONETSK AND LUHANSK REGIONS OF UKRAINE

Since July 2014, armed men representing the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) have seized 14 Kingdom Halls (houses of worship) of Jehovah's Witnesses. The armed men justified their actions by stating that Orthodoxy is the only lawful religion in the DPR and LPR and that they will eliminate all other religions.

The following chart provides an overview of the events regarding the Kingdom Halls that have been seized.

No.	Address	Time Line	Status
1.	 <p>Town of Horlivka Donetsk Region 75 Akademika Koroliova St.</p>	<p>On July 5, 2014, armed men seized the Kingdom Hall. They used it as their barracks and to store ammunition, but abandoned it in September 2014. The Witnesses returned and used the Kingdom Hall for their religious meetings.</p> <p>On October 12, 2014, armed men interrupted a religious service at the Kingdom Hall and ordered all in attendance to stop their religious activities. They stated that the Orthodox religion was the only religion permitted in the region and that they would soon "get rid of all of Jehovah's Witnesses." The men use the Kingdom Hall as their barracks.</p>	Seized by militia
2.	 <p>City of Donetsk 10 Karamzina St.</p>	<p>On August 13, 2014, armed men broke into the Kingdom Hall and used it as their barracks.</p> <p>On August 19, 2014, the men stole the sound equipment and vacated the building. The Witnesses returned and again started using the Kingdom Hall for their religious meetings.</p> <p>On October 18, 2014, after a religious service, representatives of the 4th <i>Oplot</i> battalion came to the Kingdom Hall and announced to the Witnesses present that they were seizing it.</p> <p>On November 18, 2014, armed men demanded that the Witnesses sign a certificate transferring ownership of the Kingdom Hall to the Commandant's Office of the Pertovskiy and Kirovskiy District. The men use the building as barracks.</p>	Seized by militia
3.	 <p>Town of Rovenky Luhansk Region 84-A Dzerzhynskoho St.</p>	<p>On September 23, 2014, armed men from the <i>George</i> battalion broke into the Kingdom Hall and forbade the Witnesses to return. The armed men use it as their barracks.</p>	Seized by militia
4.	 <p>Town of Antratsyt Luhansk Region 4 Komunarska St.</p>	<p>On September 16 and 26, 2014, unknown individuals broke into the Kingdom Hall, stole electronic equipment, and wrote on the wall, "Orthodox Cossacks!"</p> <p>On September 25, 2014, a local TV channel reported that the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses have been seized to serve other purposes, e.g., as a kindergarten.</p>	Seized by civilians

5.	 <p>Town of Horlivka Donetsk Region 3a Viliamsa Akademika St.</p>	<p>At the end of June 2014, armed men broke into the Kingdom Hall, stole electronic equipment, and installed new locks. They use it as their barracks.</p>	Seized by militia
6.	 <p>Town of Horlivka Donetsk Region 4 Hertsenia St.</p>	<p>Since 2013, this building has repeatedly been the object of vandalism and arson attacks. The last attempted arson took place on June 5, 2014.</p> <p>On September 30, 2014, a local TV station interviewed the “new owner” of the building, who stated that the building was seized from Jehovah’s Witnesses for use as a boxing school.</p>	Seized by civilians
7.	 <p>Town of Zhdanivka Donetsk Region 14 Komsomolska St.</p>	<p>On October 27, 2014, referring to a commandant’s order, men of the Horlivka armed group seized the Kingdom Hall. The Horlivka Deputy Commandant stated that the Orthodox religion is the only religion permitted in the region and that all others are forbidden.</p> <p>On November 21, 2014, the squad commander of another armed group took control and told Jehovah’s Witnesses that his subordinates would now take charge of the Kingdom Hall since it is now on Russian soil.</p>	Seized by militia
8.	 <p>City of Donetsk 53-A Ostrovskoho St.</p>	<p>On October 26, 2014, armed men from the <i>Shakhtar</i> battalion of the DPR broke into the Kingdom Hall and now use it as their barracks.</p>	Seized by militia
9.	 <p>Town of Perevalsk Luhansk Region 9-A Kosinova St.</p>	<p>On November 5, 2014, armed men, led by the Deputy Chief of the Military Commandant’s Office, entered the building and announced to the Witnesses present that they were seizing it for use as a dining hall. The deputy chief stated, “It’s all over for Jehovah’s Witnesses,” and then told the Witnesses that they would no longer be able to engage in their religious activity.</p>	Seized by militia

10.	 <p>Town of Makiivka Donetsk Region 17 Pecherska St.</p>	<p>On November 5, 2014, armed men from the <i>Rus</i> battalion, broke into the Kingdom Hall. They ordered the Witnesses to give them the keys to the Hall and never to return. The following day, the commander's deputy removed the Kingdom Hall sign and replaced it with the battalion's flag.</p> <p>On November 26, 2014, the battalion abandoned the building.</p>	Abandoned
11.	<p>[photo unavailable]</p> <p>Town of Krasnyi Luch Luhansk Region 37 Radianska St.</p>	<p>On December 5, 2014, armed men broke into the Kingdom Hall. They placed the building under armed guard and parked military vehicles in the yard.</p>	Seized by militia
12.	 <p>Village of Telmanove Donetsk Region 112 Pervomaiska St.</p>	<p>On November 4, 2014, armed men broke into the building, and placed it under armed guard.</p> <p>On December 11, 2014, the men brought ammunition into the building and now use it as their barracks.</p>	Seized by militia
13.	 <p>Town of Zuhres Donetsk Region 1 Cherniakhovskoho St.</p>	<p>On December 20, 2014, the town's commandant announced that he was seizing the building. He ordered Jehovah's Witnesses to give him the keys to the Hall and never to return.</p>	Seized by militia
14.	<p>[photo unavailable]</p> <p>Town of Horlivka Donetsk Region 105a Vitchniana St.</p>	<p>On November 29, 2014, armed men entered the Kingdom Hall and announced to the Witnesses present that they were seizing it. One of the men stated that the DPR government forbids the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses and permits only the Orthodox religion in the region. He ordered all the religious literature of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Hall to be burned and forbade the Witnesses from returning to the building. The men used it as their barracks.</p> <p>In December 2014, the armed men abandoned the building.</p>	Abandoned