



Yerevan, Armenia  
20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2017

## **EBF Yerevan RESOLUTION on Religious Freedom in Russia**

**In solidarity with a resolution of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2017**

The European Baptist Federation Council meeting in Yerevan, Armenia, 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2017

**Reaffirms** our historic Baptist commitment to religious freedom as a gift of God to all people; 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, including those who are already facing trial.

**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.