

## Court Issues \$43 Million Sanction Order Against Russian Federation in Favor of Rothwell Figg Pro Bono Client

Firm News  
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The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled in favor of Rothwell Figg *pro bono* client Agudas Chasidei Chabad of United States as part of Chabad's long-running dispute with the Russian Federation. Read more about the case in *The New York Times*, on the *Wall Street Journal Law Blog*, and in *The Washington Post*.

Chabad is seeking to recover sacred texts that Russia has stolen from Chabad. Russia withdrew from the litigation after it lost in the Court of Appeals a preliminary round regarding the library it took in 1917 and the archive of manuscripts its troops brought to Moscow in 1945. In 2010, Judge Royce C. Lamberth of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ordered the Russian Federation to return the texts, but Russia has failed to do so. In 2013, the Court found the Russian Federation in contempt, and imposed sanctions of \$50,000 per day payable to Chabad.

On Chabad's motion, the Court entered judgment in favor of Chabad in the amount of \$43,700,000, representing the contempt sanctions that have accrued under the Court's 2013 order.

Nathan Lewin, an attorney for Chabad, stated that "this is another important victory for Chabad, but the ultimate goal remains to secure the sacred texts."

The Court further ordered that the money judgment will increase by \$4,500,000 every ninety days, until the Russian Federation complies with the Court's previous orders.

The Court issued the order over an objection from the U.S. Department of State that a sanctions judgment "would set another troubling precedent for foreign governments, which could threaten the United States' own position in litigation in foreign courts," concluding that the Court was "not persuaded that retaliatory or "tit-for-tat" litigation against the United States [by the Russian Federation] should be the basis for shirking its responsibility to make rulings consistent with law," and that ruling otherwise would

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“be a troubling precedent, indeed.”

Steven Lieberman, who argued on behalf of Chabad, was similarly pleased with the decision. “The Court recognized that Russia remains intransigent and that additional action was warranted to effectuate its orders. Chabad will use the well-reasoned opinion to continue to fight on until the texts are returned.”

Chabad is represented by Steven Lieberman, Robert Parker, and Jennifer Nock of Rothwell, Figg, Ernst & Manbeck, P.C., and Nathan Lewin and Alyza Lewin of Lewin & Lewin, LLP. The case is Agudas Chasidei Chabad of United States v. Russian Federation, et al., No. 05-cv-1548.