

Russian orthodox cult leaves hideout

by UPI

MOSCOW -- Some cult members awaiting the end of the world in a Russian cave emerged Tuesday due to structural concerns of their hideout, government officials said. Oleg Melnichenko, the deputy governor of the Penza region in west-central Russia, said two rooms in the hideout collapsed Tuesday. Fourteen people, including two children, left the cave due to the collapse, the Interfax news agency reported. Fourteen cult members remained in the cave. Melnichenko said crews fixed the structure but cautioned the structure remained unsafe. The 35-member cult, calling itself the "True Russian Orthodox Church" threatened mass suicide by igniting gasoline canisters if Russian authorities tried to intervene, CNN said. The group was hiding out in the cave since November and the CNN report suggested the members agreed to come out when authorities promised not to transfer its leader, Pyotr Kuznetsov, to a mental institution. The members said they would come out of their cave on April 27, the Orthodox Easter.

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