

# Reference Document

*“Watchtower Just Claimed God Stopped a War”*

EVERY CLAIM, SOURCE, AND VERIFICATION STATUS

## How to Use This Document

Each entry below identifies a specific factual claim made in the video, the source it is based on, where to verify it, and any notes on confidence. Claims are listed in the order they appear in the video. Quotations are reproduced exactly from the source.

**PRIMARY** — a court ruling, government record, official Watchtower publication or broadcast, or census data. Primary sources stand on their own.

**SECONDARY** — established human-rights reporting, religious-liberty journalism, or an analysis site working from primary figures. Strongest alongside a primary source.

## SECTION 1 — What the Broadcast Claims

**Claim: In the broadcast, a brother in Ukraine credits Jehovah's blessing for the air-raid sirens staying silent during a visit by Governing Body member Mark Sanderson.**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower broadcast — the artifact this video analyzes.
- **Key quote:** “From the time that Brother Sanderson arrived until the day he departed, there were no air alarms at all in the area where the branch is located. It was truly amazing! (~03:45)”

**Claim: The broadcast describes a U.S. branch visit as “a warm hug from our loving heavenly Father.”**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower broadcast.
- **Key quote:** “By means of this visit, we received a warm hug from our loving heavenly Father. (~03:00)”

**Claim: The broadcast itself states the quiet weekend in Ukraine occurred because the authorities declared a truce.**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower broadcast — the worldly cause is named on-screen.
- **Key quote:** “because the authorities declared a truce on the weekend, we were able to hold a special meeting... without any air alarms across the country. (~04:12)”

**Claim: The broadcast frames Governing Body member Stephen Lett's April 2026 shepherding visit to Myanmar as evidence of Jehovah's love arriving exactly when needed.**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower broadcast.

**Claim: In the same broadcast, the organization reports that a sister died of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower broadcast.
- **Key quote:** “Sadly, as of June 8, one sister has died. (~07:20)”

**Claim: The broadcast also reports that a publisher died and others were injured in a June 8, 2026 earthquake in the Philippines.**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower broadcast.
- **Key quote:** “one publisher died and six others were injured (~08:32)”

**Claim: The broadcast reports the U.S. special meeting drew 1.4 million in attendance.**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower broadcast. This is special-event attendance, not the number of active Witnesses (see Section 4).
- **Key quote:** “the total attendance was 1.4 million. (~02:48)”

**Claim: The broadcast's closing remarks are delivered by a member of the Governing Body who states that he is 91 years old.**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower broadcast.
- **Note:** Identified on-screen only as a member of the Governing Body; not named here.
- **Key quote:** “This year I'm 91 years old. (~14:02)”

## SECTION 2 — The Doctrine the Broadcast Contradicts

**Claim: Watchtower teaches that misfortune — including the deaths of faithful Witnesses — results from “time and unforeseen occurrence” (Ecclesiastes 9:11), not from God singling anyone out.**

- **Source:** *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), 2013, p. 238; also the 2012 *Yearbook*, p. 209, and *The Watchtower* (Study), 2012
- **Verify:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/s/r1/lp-e?q=%22time%20and%20unforeseen%20occurrence%22>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower publications.
- **Key quote:** “Some events take place as a result of “time and unforeseen occurrence.” (2013 Watchtower)”

**Claim: Watchtower teaches that natural disasters kill good and bad people alike — with no divine sorting.**

- **Source:** *The Watchtower* (Public), 2011, p. 355; also *Awake!*, 1986
- **Verify:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/s/r1/lp-e?q=%22kill%20good%20and%20bad%20people%20alike%22>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower publications.
- **Key quote:** “today's natural disasters, which kill good and bad people alike (2011 Watchtower)”

**Claim: Watchtower teaches that God is not responsible for the suffering caused by natural disasters.**

- **Source:** *Awake!*, 2012, p. 363; also *The Watchtower*, 2008
- **Verify:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/s/r1/lp-e?q=%22God%20is%20not%20responsible%22>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower publications.
- **Key quote:** “God is not responsible for the misery... (2012 Awake!)”

**Claim: Watchtower teaches that God shows no favoritism — he “makes his sun rise” on the good and the bad alike (Matthew 5:45).**

- **Source:** *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), 2025, p. 14
- **Verify:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/s/r1/lp-e?q=%22makes%20his%20sun%20rise%22>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower publication.
- **Key quote:** “we imitate Jehovah God, who “makes his sun rise” on both...”

**Claim: Watchtower has, for decades, attributed positive outcomes to “Jehovah's blessing on his organization.”**

- **Source:** *The Watchtower* (Study), 2022, p. 5; also *The Watchtower*, 1964
- **Verify:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/s/r1/lp-e?q=%22blessing%20on%20his%20organization%22>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Official Watchtower publications.
- **Key quote:** “This could be accomplished only with Jehovah's blessing on his organization. (2022 Watchtower)”

## SECTION 3 — The Legal Record: Norway and Sweden

**Claim: The broadcast frames Norway's action against Jehovah's Witnesses as the result of “misinformation.”**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — The broadcast's own characterization of the dispute.
- **Key quote:** “the government of Norway began receiving misinformation about Jehovah's Witnesses (~09:41)”

**Claim: On April 30, 2026, Norway's Supreme Court ruled that the government's 2022 deregistration of Jehovah's Witnesses and its denial of state grants were illegal. The decision is final and cannot be appealed.**

- **Source:** Supreme Court of Norway ruling, April 30, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/norway/Norwegian-Supreme-Court-Issues-Significant-Ruling-in-Favor-of-Jehovahs-Witnesses/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Court ruling, reported by the parties and independent outlets (see also HRWF and Bitter Winter, Additional Sources).
- **Note:** The verdict went in the Witnesses' favor; this video critiques how the broadcast frames it, not the outcome.

**Claim: Norway's 2022 action was not driven by “misinformation” but by the Witnesses' own practice of removing (disfellowshipping/shunning) members who leave or are expelled, and its effect on the right to leave freely — especially for minors. The County Governor of Oslo singled them out from more than 700 registered religious communities.**

- **Source:** Human Rights Without Frontiers; Bitter Winter; Supreme Court of Norway
- **Verify:** <https://hrwf.eu/norway-the-supreme-court-dismisses-all-accusations-against-jehovahs-witnesses/>
- **Verification: PRIMARY** — The government's stated grounds, as recorded in the case and in independent reporting.

**Claim: Jehovah's Witnesses lost the first round of the case: in March 2024 the Oslo District Court upheld the government's deregistration. They prevailed only on appeal — the Borgarting Court of Appeal (March 2025) and then the Supreme Court (April 30, 2026).**

- **Source:** Borgarting Court of Appeal (2025) and Supreme Court of Norway (2026); Bitter Winter; HRWF
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/norway/Court-of-Appeal-Unanimously-Overturns-Unconstitutional-Ruling-in-Norway/>
- **Verification: PRIMARY** — Court records and independent reporting of the procedural history.

**Claim: Even in the final Supreme Court win, the court was divided on the shunning question. A minority of justices considered that the practice can pressure members and cost minors contact with family; the majority ruled for the Witnesses because the State had not met the evidentiary bar to prove serious harm — not because the concern was baseless.**

- **Source:** Supreme Court of Norway ruling, April 30, 2026; Human Rights Without Frontiers; Bitter Winter
- **Verify:** <https://hrwf.eu/norway-the-supreme-court-dismisses-all-accusations-against-jehovahs-witnesses/>
- **Verification: SECONDARY** — Reported reasoning and the majority/minority split.
- **Note:** The point is the broadcast's framing, not the result — the Witnesses won the final appeal.

**Claim: Following the District Court loss, Watchtower adjusted its official handling of shunning — including no longer bringing minors into judicial (disfellowshipping) committees without a parent, and permitting a brief greeting to disfellowshipped persons at the Kingdom Hall.**

- **Source:** Watchtower's 2024 updates to congregation procedures, reported by Bitter Winter and AvoidJW
- **Verify:** <https://bitterwinter.org/jehovahs-witnesses-win-landmark-case-at-the-norwegian-supreme-court/>
- **Verification: SECONDARY** — Independent reporting on the policy changes.
- **Note:** These reversals are examined in detail, with primary-source documents, in the channel's video “The Great Rebrand.”

**Claim: In Sweden, an administrative court ruled in the Witnesses' favor on state-grant eligibility, and the Swedish government has appealed — so the matter is not yet final.**

- **Source:** Administrative Court of Stockholm, judgment of May 7, 2026 (case no. 23674-25); the appeal is stated in the broadcast itself
- **Verify:** <https://bitterwinter.org/jehovahs-witnesses-after-norway-sweden-also-rediscovered-neutrality-and-religious-freedom/>
- **Verification: PRIMARY** — Court ruling (independent reporting); the pending appeal is reported by the broadcast.
- **Note:** The broadcast presents the win as settled while mentioning the appeal only briefly.

**Claim: Neither Norway nor Sweden banned Jehovah's Witnesses or their practice of shunning. Both cases concerned state registration and public funding (subsidies) — not a prohibition of the religion or its practices.**

- **Source:** Supreme Court of Norway (2026); Administrative Court of Stockholm (2026); HRWF; Bitter Winter
- **Verify:** <https://hrwf.eu/norway-the-supreme-court-dismisses-all-accusations-against-jehovahs-witnesses/>
- **Verification: PRIMARY** — Court records: the disputes were over registration and grants, not a ban.
- **Note:** This is the central correction to the broadcast's “persecution” framing.

## SECTION 4 — The Numbers

**Claim: The celebrated “1.4 million” is special-event attendance — which includes children, Bible students, and interested visitors — not the count of active Jehovah's Witnesses.**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026; analysis at [jwfacts.com](http://jwfacts.com)
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification: PRIMARY** — The broadcast labels it “total attendance” at a special meeting; the publisher count is separate.
- **Key quote:** “the total attendance was 1.4 million. (~02:48)”

**Claim: The actual number of Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States (peak publishers) is about 1.25 million — 1,259,538 in the 2024 service year.**

- **Source:** 2024 Service Year Report of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide (jw.org)
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/2024-Service-Year-Report-of-Jehovahs-Witnesses-Worldwide/2024-Grand-Totals/>
- **Verification: PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own published figures.

**Claim: The U.S. population is roughly 337 million.**

- **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau
- **Verify:** <https://www.census.gov/popclock/>
- **Verification: PRIMARY** — Official government population data (Census mid-2020s estimates ~337–340 million).

**Claim: U.S. Jehovah's Witnesses are about 0.37% of the population — roughly 1 in every 270 Americans.**

- **Source:** Watchtower publisher counts (Service Year Reports) ÷ U.S. Census population
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/2024-Service-Year-Report-of-Jehovahs-Witnesses-Worldwide/2024-Grand-Totals/>
- **Verification: PRIMARY** — Computed from two primary sources — Watchtower's own counts and the U.S. Census.

**Claim: As a share of the population, U.S. Jehovah's Witnesses have been declining for over a decade — proportionally more in 2013–2014 (a peak near 0.39%, about 1 in 256) than today (about 0.37%, 1 in 270).**

- **Source:** Watchtower Yearbooks and Service Year Reports, 1955–2024, ÷ U.S. Census population
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/2024-Service-Year-Report-of-Jehovahs-Witnesses-Worldwide/2024-Grand-Totals/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Watchtower's own annual counts against Census population.
- **Note:** Cross-checks within a few points of Watchtower's own printed “one publisher to \_\_\_” ratio every year.

**Claim: U.S. growth slowed dramatically after the mid-1990s and now runs around 1% a year — barely above U.S. population growth.**

- **Source:** jwfacts.com (analysis of Watchtower's published figures)
- **Verify:** <https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/statistics.php>
- **Verification:** **SECONDARY** — Established analysis site, computed from Watchtower's own statistics.

**Claim: The preaching work required to produce one new baptized member has roughly doubled — from about 3,500 hours per baptism around 1990 to over 7,000 hours in recent years.**

- **Source:** jwfacts.com (computed from Watchtower's published hours and baptism totals)
- **Verify:** <https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/statistics.php>
- **Verification:** **SECONDARY** — Established analysis site, using Watchtower's own reported field-service hours and baptisms.

**Claim: The United States — the organization's largest branch — had not received a branch visit since 2014, a gap of about twelve years.**

- **Source:** *2026 Governing Body Update #4*, JW Broadcasting (jw.org), released June 12, 2026
- **Verify:** <https://www.jw.org/en/news/region/global/2026-Governing-Body-Update-4/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY** — Stated by the broadcast itself, beneath its language of growth and blessing.
- **Key quote:** “the United States received a branch visit for the first time since 2014. (~01:46)”

## SECTION 5 — Additional Supporting Sources

### Watchtower Online Library

- **Source:** wol.jw.org (Watchtower's official digital library) — <https://wol.jw.org/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY**
- **Contains:** Search any quoted Watchtower publication by phrase to read it in full context.

### Human Rights Without Frontiers — Norway & Sweden

- **Source:** hrwf.eu — <https://hrwf.eu/norway-the-supreme-court-dismisses-all-accusations-against-jehovahs-witnesses/>
- **Verification:** **SECONDARY**
- **Contains:** Independent human-rights reporting on the Norwegian and Swedish state-funding cases.

## **Bitter Winter — Norway & Sweden**

- **Source:** bitterwinter.org — <https://bitterwinter.org/jehovahs-witnesses-after-norway-sweden-also-rediscover-neutrality-and-religious-freedom/>
- **Verification:** **SECONDARY**
- **Contains:** Independent religious-liberty journalism detailing both rulings and their reasoning.

## **jwfacts.com — statistics**

- **Source:** jwfacts.com — <https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/statistics.php>
- **Verification:** **SECONDARY**
- **Contains:** Analysis of Watchtower's own published membership, baptism, and field-service figures.

## **U.S. Census Bureau**

- **Source:** census.gov — <https://www.census.gov/popclock/>
- **Verification:** **PRIMARY**
- **Contains:** Official U.S. population data used for the ratios above.

## **“The Great Rebrand” (this channel)**

- **Source:** EXJW Analyzer
- **Verification:** **SECONDARY**
- **Contains:** The companion video documenting Watchtower's recent policy reversals, with primary-source receipts.