

Public call by human rights and other organizations in the OSCE region due to the intention of the Russian authorities to wind up two oldest human rights organizations in the country

It became known on November 11, 2021, that the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation filed a lawsuit to wind up Memorial International for allegedly systematic violations of the law on “foreign agents”. The organization is accused of not labeling its materials with a reference to its “foreign agent” status.

Other structural divisions of the organization, including the Memorial Human Rights Center (hereinafter Memorial HRC) can also be wound up. The reason is several long-standing so-called “labeling violations”, for each of which Memorial HRC has already paid two huge fines, as well as technical claims to the publication of reports.

In addition, the statement of the Moscow Prosecutor's Office contains a politically motivated accusation that, in violation of the Federal Constitutional Law “On the Judicial System of the Russian Federation” Memorial HRC allegedly “denies the facts established by the decisions of the Russian Federation Supreme Court that have come into force, forms an opinion about their illegality and optional execution”. Memorial HRC is also unjustifiably imputed that the organization's materials contain signs of “justifying” the activities of members of “terrorist” and “extremist” organizations, and that these materials “form the opinion among their addressees about the admissibility of participation in the activities of extremist and terrorist organizations”. By justifying extremism and terrorism, the Moscow Prosecutor's Office means the lists of political prisoners maintained by the Memorial HRC political prisoners support program, as well as information on individual cases.

The true motive behind the intentions to wind up Memorial International and Memorial HRC is the desire of the Russian authorities to destroy any public discussion and human rights support of people who are persecuted for political reasons, as well as to stop research on the repressions of the Soviet period and delete the historical memory of the mass crimes committed during this period.

We welcome the protest of the Council of Europe Secretary General and her [call](#) to revise the procedure for the elimination of so-called “foreign agents”, as well as to bring Russian legislation on non-governmental organizations in line with the Council of Europe standards. We strongly urge the Council of Europe to take decisive actions if this call is not heeded by the Russian authorities.

We also call on the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to protect the rights of Memorial International and Memorial HRC to operate, and the OSCE Secretary General and Chairperson to express their disagreement with the steps taken by the Russian authorities to suppress human rights activities that should be welcomed in accordance with OSCE commitments.

We appeal to international institutions, human rights organizations, democratic governments, all active citizens, and request by all legal means to protest against the next round of political repression in Russia, which, in the event of the two oldest human rights organizations winding up, will reach their point of no return.

In this case, the blow of the Russian authorities is directed against human rights defenders, which is a violation of the international obligations of the Russian Federation, in particular, the Declaration adopted by the General Assembly on December 9, 1998 on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and bodies of society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Organizations that supported the open appeal:

Center for Civil Liberties (Ukraine)
Human Rights Platform (Ukraine)
Kharkiv Human Rights Group (Ukraine)
Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (Ukraine)
Without Borders Project (Ukraine)
All-Ukrainian NGO Chysta Khvyliya (Clear Wave) (Ukraine)
Institute of Religious Freedom (Ukraine)
Legal Policy Research Center (Kazakhstan)
Belarusian Helsinki Committee (Belarus)
Viasna Human Rights Centre (Belarus)
DRA — German-Russian Exchange (Germany)
Law Enforcement Research Center (Ukraine)
Public Verdict Foundation (Russia)
Center for Participation and Development (Georgia)
Tbilisi Shelter City Project (Georgia)
Protection of Rights without Borders NGO (Armenia)
Centre de la Protection Internationale (France)
Non-governmental non-profit organization “Centre of Public Initiatives “Ideas for Change” (Ukraine)
Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly-Vanadzor (Armenia)
Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (Bulgaria)
Human Rights Center (Georgia)
Public Association “Dignity” (Kazakhstan)
Luhansk Regional Human Rights Center “Alternative” (Ukraine)
Promo-LEX Association (Moldova)
ZMINA Human Rights Center (Ukraine)
PUBLIC FOUNDATION “NOTABENE” (Tajikistan)
Saratov Human Rights Group (Russia)
Association of Ukrainian Human Rights Monitors on Law Enforcement (Ukraine)
Norwegian Helsinki Committee (Norway)
Civil Society Institute (Ukraine, Kyiv)
Georgian Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (GCRT) (Georgia)
Liberation Movement Research Center (Ukraine)
Assemblée Européenne des Citoyens – France (Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, France).
Human Rights House Foundation (Switzerland)
Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan)
Open Dialogue Foundation (Belgium)
Human Rights House in Chernihiv (Ukraine)
Donbas SOS NGO (Ukraine)
Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowieka (Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights) (Warsaw, Poland)
Truth Hounds (Ukraine)
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (Paris, France)
Sova Expert Group (Ukraine)
Netherlands Helsinki Committee (Netherlands)
Human Rights in Mental Health-Federation Global Initiative on Psychiatry
Solidarus e: V. (Germany)
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland)
Minority Rights Group in Europe (UK)
Helsinki Association for Human Rights (Armenia)

Civil Liberties Office (Tajikistan)
Kharkiv Foundation Public Alternative (Ukraine)
Civil Society Institute (Ukraine)
ANT Network (Ukraine)
Open Society Foundation (Ukraine)
Crude Accountability (USA)
Swedish OSCE-network (Sweden)
Political Science Association (Ukraine)
National Society of Cinematographers of Ukraine (Ukraine)
Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research (Ukraine)
Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (Kazakhstan)
Human Rights Monitoring Institute (Lithuania)
CrimeaSOS Public Organization (Ukraine)
Center for Development of Democracy and Human Rights (Russia)
Human Rights Club Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan)
Swiss Helsinki Committee (Switzerland)
Macedonian Helsinki Committee (North Macedonia)
“Growth Point: Education and Science” Public Organization (Ukraine)
Libereco Partnership for Human Rights (Germany)
PEN Ukraine
Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (Azerbaijan)
World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) (Brussels)
International Renaissance Foundation (Ukraine)
Regional Center for the Human Rights
Human Rights Movement: Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyzstan)
One World Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyzstan)
Boris Zvozkov Belarusian House of Human Rights named after (Belarus)
Belarusian Association of Journalists (Belarus)
Institute for Territorial Development (Ukraine)
American Russian-Speaking Human Rights Association (USA)
Svoboda Alliance VIC (Australia)
Svoboda Alliance SA (Australia)
Association of Women for Higher Professional Education "Consent" (Georgia)
Hungarian Helsinki Committee (Hungary)
SOVA Information and Analytical Center (Russia)
Civil Control St. Petersburg Public Human Rights Organization (Russia)
Institute Republica (Ukraine)
Actyvna Hromada (Active Community) All-Ukrainian Initiative (Ukraine)
Global Ukraine Foundation (Ukraine — France)
Adilet Legal Clinic (Kyrgyzstan)
Theater for Change Public Organization (Ukraine)
Centre of Policy and Legal Reforms (Ukraine)
Together Against Corruption (Ukraine)
Don Women (Russia)
Human Rights Movement “405” (Kazakhstan)
Qaharman Human Rights Defense Foundation (Kazakhstan)
Podilska Agency for Regional Development, Public Organization (Ukraine)
ICO Environment-People-Law (Ukraine)
Public organization “Human Rights Association“ Pravo Delo”(Ukraine)
Shoulder to Shoulder Charitable Foundation (Ukraine)
International Public Movement "Association of Foreign Ukrainians" (Russia, Georgia)
Center for Democracy and Rule of Law (Ukraine)

Ukrainian Center for European Politics (Ukraine)

KULTURUS. Festival of Contemporary Culture and Human Rights (Czech Republic)