

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DIARY NOTE

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN RUSSIA AHEAD OF SOCHI OLYMPICS

As the Olympic flame arrives in Moscow to start its journey to Sochi for February's Winter Olympic Games, Amnesty International is calling on its millions of members around the world to join a campaign to highlight the violations to the rights of freedom of expression, assembly and association that are rife in modern day Russia.

"Russia today is a country where peaceful 'unauthorised' public gatherings are brutally dispersed. It is a country whose Parliament passes homophobic legislation and the government spearheads smear campaigns. Extortionate fines are imposed on non-governmental organizations and critics of the government risk prosecution through broadened and vague definitions of treason and re-criminalisation of libel. Young women are imprisoned for singing a political song and human rights defenders and lawyers are harassed by an increasing crackdown on freedoms.

"This calls for a strong response. Hosting the Olympic Games is a privilege and the respect of rights and freedoms should be demanded of any host country," said Denis Krivosheev, Europe and Central Asia Deputy Programme Director.

Through public actions and petitions, Amnesty International's members are urging the Russian authorities to repeal new repressive legislation and to uphold the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly in Russia.

For more information please contact the Amnesty International organization in your country --
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