

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Human rights defenders in Russia under threat

Five years after the murder of Anna Politkovskaya, the investigative journalist, little progress has been made to increase the safety of journalists or human rights defenders who dare to expose abuses or challenge authority in Russia, Amnesty International said today.

“In Russia, journalists, human rights defenders and civil society activists are targeted and often murdered because of their work. This cannot be tolerated. Attacks are not being fully and impartially investigated and perpetrators are not being brought to justice,” said John Dalhuisen, Europe and Central Asia Deputy Programme Director.

“Unless and until such critical voices receive the recognition and protection they need – and are entitled to – Russia will not get the civil society it needs. In its place, corruption, the abuse of power and human rights violations will continue to flourish.”

While there has been some progress with the investigation into Anna Politkovskaya’s murder on 7 October 2006, there is still no guarantee that all those involved, including those who ordered this crime, will be brought to justice.

Human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists continue to face threats and harassment for courageous work uncovering human rights abuses and corruption across the Russian Federation.

Since 2006 a number of human rights defenders, journalists and human rights lawyers had been attacked and severely beaten or murdered. Only the murders of lawyer Stanislav Markelov and journalist Anastasia Baburova have been successfully investigated and the perpetrators convicted. Other cases, including the abduction and murder of human rights defender Natalia Estemirova, the brutal beatings of *Kommersant Daily* journalist Oleg Kashin or editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Khimkinkaia Pravda* Mikhail Beketov remain unsolved.

In the coming year, Amnesty International activists will continue to campaign for full and impartial investigations in to attacks against human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists in Russia. Activists will urge the Russian authorities to ensure that human rights defenders can work freely and without fear of harassment.

“Strong international support for and solidarity with civil society in Russia will be vital if we are to help change the climate of impunity and encourage positive changes,” said John Dalhuisen.

#### See also:

[Beaten up for Speaking out: Attacks on human rights defenders and journalists in the Russian Federation](#)

[New arrest for Anna Politkovskaya’s murder – step in the right direction](#)

[Russian Federation: Human rights defenders working in Chechnya subjected to further threats and harassment](#)

[Little progress on second anniversary of prominent Chechen activist’s killing](#)

[Fresh threats against human rights defenders in Chechnya](#)

[Russian human rights defender not guilty of slander charges](#)

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