



AI Index: EUR 46/7888/2024

25 March 2024

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ORAL STATEMENT

Item 6

Consideration of UPR reports: Russian Federation

UN Human Rights Council

55th session

26 February – 5 April

Mr. President,

It is with regret but no particular surprise that we note that the Russian authorities have made no meaningful commitments following its UPR, and only accepted broad recommendations not requiring any real action.

The Russian Government's responses contradict well-known facts, demonstrating its disregard for Russia's human rights obligations and refusal to genuinely engage with the international community on its appalling human rights record.

The Russian Government states that there are no political prisoners in the country, yet hundreds have been prosecuted and jailed merely for criticizing the Kremlin or denouncing Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Among them was Aleksei Navalny, who recently died in custody after years of arbitrary detention and ill-treatment.

The Russian Government points out that the [Russian] Constitution prohibits discrimination, but declares defence of LGBTI persons' rights "extremism" and arrests people for kissing someone of the same gender.

The Russian Government argues that it cooperates with non-profit organizations despite closing down the most prominent, authoritative human rights NGOs, including Memorial and Moscow Helsinki Group. Memorial's Oleg Orlov was imprisoned for his anti-war statements. Many other human rights defenders have been forced into exile.

Mr. President,

International human rights obligations are not a burden or interference in internal affairs. We urge the Russian authorities to reconsider their stance and to commit in earnest to protect, respect and fulfil human rights.

We call on the Russian Government to ensure effective guarantees of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, to end discrimination based on religion, sexual orientation or

identity or any other status, to combat torture and other ill-treatment, and to cooperate fully with the ICC, UN special procedures and other international human rights mechanisms.

The Russian Federation must also end all human rights violations in areas under its control in Ukraine, and end its war of aggression which is a crime under international law.

Thank you.