

## **HRC46 NGO statement on the Russian Federation**

### **Item 4 General Debate**

Madam President,

This statement is made on behalf of 8 organisations, who together call on the Human Rights Council to address the human rights situation in the Russian Federation.

Our organisations condemn the arbitrary prohibition and violent dispersal of the overwhelmingly peaceful protests demanding the release of opposition activist Aleksei Navalny, and ending corruption. Since Navalny's return to the Russian Federation and the mass protests that ensued, human rights organisations have documented the arbitrary detention of at least 11,000 individuals in more than 125 Russian cities, at least 150 of whom are journalists. At least 140 protesters were beaten in detention. 90 face criminal charges.<sup>1</sup> [Of the total number of detainees, 1400 were arrested for participating in an impromptu protest following the announcement that Aleksei Navalny's non-custodial sentence, in a previous fabricated case, must be replaced with a prison term of three and a half years, of which Navalny would have to serve two years and eight months, accounting for time spent under house arrest.]

We call on the Russian Federation's authorities to respect the government's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and immediately release Aleksei Navalny and all those arbitrarily arrested in connection with the peaceful protests, ensure their right to life and freedom from torture [while still in custody], to end their unfounded prosecution and to put an end to intimidation and harassment against the political opposition and civil society activists. [We call on the Russian Federation to conduct a thorough review of its regulations for assemblies and ensure that peaceful protests can be held without obstacles or fear of reprisals.]

The crackdown on peaceful protesters is clearly contrary to upholding the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, as is expected of a Council member such as the Russian Federation. Therefore, we call on all States to take adequate measures to address human rights violations and ensure scrutiny of the human rights situation in the Russian Federation.

We are also alarmed at the Russian Federation's systematic questioning of the legitimacy of civil society space in UN fora, and its attempts to limit the scope of Special Procedures' mandates. For years, the Russian Federation has used a selective approach to granting requests for visit, [granting access only to the less sensitive mandates and refusing to grant access to mandate such as the Special Rapporteurs on torture, on freedom of expression, on freedom of assembly, on freedom of religion, on human rights defenders, on toxics and human rights and the Working Group on enforced disappearances]. We call on all States to maintain and protect civil society space in UN fora, as well as the work of Special Procedures mandates.

Thank you.

1 For more information, see "*Crackdown on peaceful protests in January — February 2021 in Russia*", OVD-Info, consulted on February 24, 2021, <https://ovdinfo.org/reports/winter-2021-suppression-en#1>

*Signatories:*

- Amnesty International
- Article 19
- CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
- Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF)
- Human Rights Watch (HRW)
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
- World Coalition Against Torture (OMCT)