



United States Mission to the OSCE

On Serious Human Rights Violations in Russia

As delivered by Political Counselor Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 6, 2023

We condemn Tuesday's brutal attack on journalist Elena Milashina and her colleague and lawyer Alexander Nemov. This is not the first time that journalists from *Novaya Gazeta* have been attacked. In fact, in the three decades since the outlet's founding, six of its journalists have been murdered. This is not the first time Ms. Milashina has been attacked either. In 2012, she was attacked by unknown assailants, likely in connection with her investigations into human rights abuses and violations – including torture and ill-treatment -- in Chechnya and the murder of her mentor at *Novaya Gazeta*, Anna Politkovskaya. Then, in February of 2020, we spoke here in this room after she was again attacked with her colleague, human rights lawyer Marina Dubrovina. At that time, we called on Russia to provide a credible, federal-level investigation into this incident and hold the perpetrators to account, but it has not.

Ms. Milashina's work has covered a wide range of the most important topics in Russia, ranging from drug-trafficking and terrorist attacks to protecting the human rights of members of the LGBTQI+ community and journalists. Despite threats and attacks, she has remained a powerful journalist and a strong advocate for human rights and fundamental freedoms that are embedded in the foundational principles of this Organization.

Milashina and Nemov were attacked on their way to court, where Nemov was representing his client Zarema Musayeva, whose family has been repeatedly targeted for repression due to their criticism of Chechen authorities. Musayeva was sentenced to 5.5 years in prison on what human rights defenders describe as politically motivated charges.

The Russian Federation's constitution unconditionally guarantees freedom of expression, assembly, and association. However, as the Rapporteur noted in the most recent Moscow Mechanism Report, Russia has willfully and systematically failed to fulfill its OSCE commitments in the human dimension. We call on the Russian government to identify Elena Milashina and Alexander Nemov's attackers, ensure they are prosecuted for their crimes, protect media freedom - which my Russian counterpart just noted he cares deeply about - and the safety of journalists, and comply with its international human rights obligations and commitments, including respecting and ensuring freedom of expression.

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