



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

Joint Statement on Human Rights Situation in Russia

OSCE Permanent Council

30 March 2023

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 30 March 2023

1. Thank you, Mr Chair.
2. I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following participating States – Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, the United Kingdom, and my own country Norway.
3. Last year’s Moscow Mechanism report highlighted the horrifying scale of restrictive policies implemented by Russia over the last decade. Russia’s legislation on so-called “foreign agents” and “undesirable organisations” is used as a tool to suppress civil society and human rights defenders.
4. Since the publication of the report, we have seen continued repression of human rights activists and civil society organisations across Russia and raised this at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting earlier this month. The situation has only deteriorated further since then.
5. We strongly condemn the Russian government’s continued and seemingly endless, wide-scale designation of civil society organisations and human rights defenders as “foreign agents”, including the most recent designations.
6. We condemn the recent raids and criminal investigations targeting the leadership of 2022 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Memorial, in their homes and offices, and the request of Russia’s Justice Ministry to disband Moscow-based SOVA Analytical Center, which conducts and publishes research focused on racism, nationalism

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and xenophobia in Russia. These tactics to intimidate, silence and oppress will not succeed.

7. Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Kremlin has implemented a wave of legislation targeting the dissemination of “knowingly false information” and “discrediting” of Russian armed forces to silence those critical of the invasion of Ukraine. Over 4,000 people have been prosecuted because of these laws, including dual British Russian national Vladimir Kara-Murza.
8. Mr Kara-Murza is a human rights defender, journalist and political prisoner detained since April 2022 for sharing “fake news” about the actions of the Russian military in Ukraine. We condemn the clearly politically motivated charging of Vladimir Kara-Murza and continue to call for his release, whilst following his trial this week. We call for the release of other political prisoners in Russia, like Alexandra Skochilenko, Ilya Yashin, Alexei Gorinov, Alexey Navalny, and many others.
9. Mr Chair, we will continue to defend human rights and the fundamental freedoms of citizens everywhere. We again call on Russia to heed the warnings and recommendations of the Moscow Mechanism report, comply with its OSCE Human Dimension commitments and critically assess the short-and long-term consequences of the “foreign agents” law, amongst other repressive legislation intended to crack down on civil society.
10. We look forward to wholeheartedly supporting the work of the newly appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Russia. We will not allow Russia to discredit the Rapporteur’s findings.
11. Russia’s crackdown on civil society transcends national borders, as was highlighted in the Moscow Mechanism report, which revealed a clear link between internal repression of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Russia and external aggression abroad directed at Ukraine. Respect for human rights within states, remains essential to lasting security among states.
12. We note and commend the work of ODIHR and the Representative on Freedom of the Media to ensure the voices of human rights defenders and journalists in Russia and living in exile are heard.
13. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our solidarity with all those who suffer repression at the hands of the Russian authorities and those who work tirelessly to defend human rights and fundamental freedom within Russia.