

PC.DEL/205/16
19 February 2016

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1090th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 February 2016

**In response to the statement by the representative of the
United States of America**

Mr. Chairperson,

We already provided exhaustive explanations here one week ago on the comments by the leader of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, which have been misconstrued by Western colleagues.

Incidentally, in a State which neighbours Russia, a number of political figures, including those now at the head of political factions in parliament, have at some time called for their own people to be incinerated with nuclear weapons. For some reason, that did not cause our partners from the United States of America and the European Union to worry. It would appear that Washington and Brussels saw this as a normal display by a young democracy.

The murder of Boris Nemtsov has been a tragedy for Russian society and we find it unacceptable to exploit it for the sake of political speculation. Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly stressed that the crime must be investigated carefully. He has said that “everything will be done to ensure that the organizers and perpetrators of this vile and cynical murder are properly punished.”

The investigation has already identified those suspected of having committed the murder, but only a court can decide whether they are guilty, as is well established in a State based on the rule of law. The overall investigations into the case are ongoing since it has not been discovered who was behind the crime, and so it is inappropriate to draw any political conclusions here.

With regard to Ildar Dadin, we already made comments on 17 December 2015. Please recall, that he has been sentenced to three years of deprivation of liberty under Article 212, paragraph 1, of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation on the repeated violation of the procedure established for arranging or holding meetings, rallies, demonstrations, marches and protests.

An appeal against the verdict has been submitted to the court of appeals and the execution of the sentence has not been ordered yet. The grounds will be assessed during the appeal proceedings in the Moscow municipal court before the public prosecutor.

Claims that Ildar Dadin has been sentenced to imprisonment are untrue. The court chose to impose on him a milder preventive measure: house arrest as opposed to remand in custody.

Vadim Tyumenstev, the blogger from Tomsk mentioned by our distinguished colleague from the United States of America, was convicted under Article 280, paragraph 2, of the Criminal Code for public incitement to extremism using the Internet and under Article 282, paragraph 1, for activities intended to fuel hatred and enmity and to disparage a person or group on the grounds of their ethnic origin. Unlike our United States colleagues, we bothered to watch a few of his videos on YouTube. I will not reproduce here the insults pronounced by Vadim Tyumenstev against Ukrainians and refugees from Donbas.

As far as the interregional human rights group AGORA is concerned, the reason for its closure was that it had repeatedly violated Russian law. In particular, it had failed to comply with the Federal Act on Accountancy (simplified financial statements) and the Federal Act on Non-Profit Organizations as regards requirements for constituent documents and the publication of materials (refusal to refer to the fact that this material is published by a “foreign agent” non-governmental organization).

In our view, if the closure of television channels in a number of OSCE countries, with national security given as the pretext, is nothing out of the ordinary for our Western colleagues, regulations on the activities of organizations which violate the law should really not be a problem. Nobody has abolished the principle of the rule of law.

Turning to the human rights centre Memorial, it has indeed been listed by the Russian Ministry of Justice in the register of non-profit organizations performing the functions of a “foreign agent”, along with various organizations with the same name. It was listed in accordance with the Federal Act on Non-Profit Organizations.

In October 2015, the Central Department of the Russian Ministry of Justice in Moscow conducted a scheduled inspection of the activities of Memorial, during which evidence was found that the non-profit organization was performing the functions of a “foreign agent”.

It has been established that one of the sources of the foreign funding of the organization was the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), from which Memorial had received over 25 million roubles. The total amount of foreign funding received by the organization over the period from 1 January 2014 to 25 September 2015 was about 171 million roubles. I should stress that Memorial received 93.3 per cent of its targeted funding in 2014 from foreign sources, and all 100 per cent in 2015. How else then could it be called if not a “foreign agent”?

During the inspection, Memorial’s charter was found to be in violation of provisions of current Russian legislation.

I remind you once more that the registration of organizations as “foreign agents” does not limit the activities of those non-governmental organizations in any way. Time and again we have given detailed explanations in this respect, as well as in response to allegations about our legislation on “undesirable organizations”. I always refer you to our previous statements, particularly that of 12 November 2015.

In conclusion, I should like to point out that our United States colleagues are particularly supportive when it comes to opposition figures backed by the United States Government, including financially. It is no secret to anybody that the bulk of the funding for numerous Russian non-governmental organizations, whose activities do not always match their stated goals, comes from the United States of America and the European Union. But account needs to be given when taxpayers’ money is needlessly frittered away and, lo and behold, suddenly fabrications and scaremongering are the order of the day.