

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1030th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 December 2014

**On International Human Rights Day**

Mr. Chairperson,

On 10 December, the world community commemorated International Human Rights Day, which was established by the United Nations in 1948 in connection with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The principles proclaimed in that declaration 66 years ago set global human rights standards and reference points for States and societies.

Unfortunately, a number of States have recently been trying to use human rights as a political pressure tool. A selective approach, loose interpretations of human rights and double standards are seriously compromising the integrity of the system of human rights values.

So it is that in some cases people have the right to self-determination, even in the absence of referendums. In others, the will of the people is simply ignored. In some cases, throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at police officers, killing and violence count as a “democratic revolution” for freedom and “European choice”. When the same things happen elsewhere, they are declared “mass disturbances” requiring the national guard to be sent in and the use of gas, water cannons and rubber bullets. In some countries, the pluralism of the media and free expression and the protection of journalists are regarded as absolute values; in others, this is called “State propaganda” and a blind eye is turned to bans on foreign broadcasting and the persecution and killing of journalists.

Such loose interpretations are completely unacceptable in the area of human rights. No international political or economic upheavals can justify changing the approaches to ensuring the human rights and freedoms provided for in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other fundamental international instruments in this area.

Human rights problems exist in all OSCE countries without exception, including Russia. In our country, dialogue with the human rights community is progressing well and annual meetings between the President of the Russian Federation and human rights defenders and federal and regional ombudsmen have become customary. On 2 December, the President

signed a number of orders as a result of a meeting of the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights on an extremely wide range of human rights issues.

In the OSCE area, a not inconsiderable number of problems remain that require an urgent response. These need to be combated through joint efforts, dialogue and co-operation with governments and civil society, not through moralizing and political labelling, especially not by countries that cannot even cope with overwhelming human rights problems at home, but are swift to criticize others.

We cannot but be worried by the severe systemic violations of the principles of the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights in the United States of America. We are extremely concerned about the ongoing large-scale protest actions against killings and the disproportionately harsh treatment of African Americans by the police. Since the demonstrations began, there have been many clashes between demonstrators and the police, who made active use of means of restraint including rubber bullets and tear gas. This has resulted in numerous victims. Hundreds have been detained, including American and foreign journalists.

Apart from the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, understandable popular indignation has been provoked by other incidents involving the police, and which have not resulted in indictments. These include the death of Eric Garner, suffocated by a police officer restraining him in New York. Also in New York, 28-year-old black American Akai Gurley was shot by the police. In Phoenix, Arizona, a police officer shot a black resident suspected of selling illicit drugs who was trying to escape, while in Cleveland, Ohio, 12-year-old Tamir Rice died after receiving a number of bullets in a children's playground.

It is clear there are deep-seated socio-economic reasons underlying the mass unrest, connected with the actual situation of America's black population in conjunction with growing impunity for the law enforcement authorities. According to data from the American Pew Research Center, social inequalities between blacks and whites have trebled over the past 25 years.

In connection with the recent events in the United States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein stressed that the protests were a consequence of insufficient measures by the authorities to combat systemic racial discrimination and to ensure the human rights of the black population.

It is also concerning that during the protest actions, the law enforcement authorities tried to obstruct media representatives and human rights organizations in their work. For example, the Ferguson police used tear gas against journalists and interrupted live broadcasts. During the first two months alone of the demonstrations in the United States, at least 19 journalists have been arrested, usually without observance of procedural formalities.

To date, the practice of summary and indefinite detention of prisoners and the use of inhumane torture against them have not been eradicated. It is deeply regrettable that it was specifically the position of the United States, which has so many unresolved problems in this area, that prevented the adoption of a decision on combating torture at the Ministerial Council meeting in Basel.

The issues of violations of privacy and systematic eavesdropping on the communications of ordinary citizens, companies and the media remain unresolved.

One of the most serious challenges is migration and the increasing flow of asylum seekers. And if Russia, despite all of its difficulties, can manage to cope with an influx of almost a million refugees from Ukraine, the European Union States' policy of cracking down on migrants from the Mediterranean cannot but cause concern. What will be the cost of the United Kingdom's refusal to support search and rescue operations for migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean Sea? The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau, has referred to that measure as "appalling".

Of serious concern is the high level of violence against women and children. Trafficking in human beings for purposes of sexual and labour exploitation, including trafficking in children, as well as trafficking for the purposes of extracting organs, tissues and cells have also become global challenges and threats alongside illicit drug trafficking.

The most dangerous challenges are the increase in racism, anti-Semitism and aggressive nationalism and neo-Nazism. We need to join forces to protect the rights of children and to create the conditions for ensuring their moral and physical well-being. Against the background of the financial and economic crisis, the issues of social protection and ensuring economic rights are particularly relevant. The highest priorities remain the integration of national minorities and the elimination of mass statelessness. Particular attention needs to be paid to creating the conditions for preserving people's ethnic and cultural distinctiveness and respect for cultural, family and religious values.

The OSCE and its human rights institutions can and must speak out loud and clear on all of these issues.

Thank you for your attention.