



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **On Freedom of the Media in the Russian Federation**

As delivered by  
Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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The United States shares the concerns of the European Union and other participating States who addressed the ongoing suppression of freedom of expression by Russian authorities. The United States spoke on this topic a few weeks ago with regard to the intensifying campaign by Russian authorities against *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (RFE/RL). Since the European Union has raised the topic today, I would like to join them in discussing repressive measures Russian authorities have taken against individual journalists, as well as give an update on the situation of RFE/RL.

On April 9, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) searched the home of one of the most prominent investigative journalists in Russia, Roman Anin, editor-in-chief of *IStories*. The search came after Anin published his work looking into corruption allegations against several high-profile Russian officials. During the search of Anin's apartment the FSB agents seized his equipment and notebooks and took him in for questioning. After his release, Anin told independent radio station *Ekho Moskvy* he believed he and his publication had been targeted by the FSB for his recent journalistic investigations.

Other independent investigative journalists have also been targeted in Russia in the last few weeks. RFE/RL's Anton Sergienko told *MBKh Media* on April 11 he had received a threatening letter—the anonymous senders wrote they were “still watching” him and knew where he lived and worked. The letter accused Sergienko of betraying his country by working with a U.S. media outlet.

On April 14, Russian law enforcement officers from the “Investigative Committee” raided the independent, student-run magazine *DOXA* in Moscow and arrested four of its editors: Armen Aramyan, Natalia Tyshkevich, Vladimir Metelkin, and Alla Gutnikova. Authorities brought criminal charges against all four, alleging they involved minors in illegal protest actions. These spurious charges appear to stem from *DOXA*'s reporting on Russian students punished by their educational institutions for participating in nationwide protest rallies earlier this year. The journalists are now under house arrest, prohibited from leaving their homes or even using the internet or other communication devices until their trial, currently set for June 14. Authorities have scheduled an astounding 24 interrogations of *DOXA* editor-in-chief, Armen Aramyan over the past 36 days. Aramyan's attorney labeled this

action an attempt by the Russian government to “create an atmosphere of fear by targeting journalists.”

These cases clearly illustrate the worsening climate of impunity for harassment and intimidation of independent journalists. We would remind Russia of its commitments under the 2018 Milan *Decision on Safety of Journalists* that “undue restrictive measures against journalists can affect their safety, prevent them from providing information to the public, and thus negatively affect the exercise of the right to freedom of expression.”

Which brings us back to RFE/RL and the excessive fines being levied against it by the Russian government under its “foreign agent” laws. Here, in the Permanent Council, the Russian delegation has repeatedly tried to create a false equivalence between the draconian measures taken against RFE/RL in Russia and the legal framework within which RT and Sputnik operate in the United States. There is no such equivalency. The Kremlin prevents RFE/RL from broadcasting on Russian television or radio and is now actively trying to drive RFE/RL out of the country. In contrast, the U.S. government in no way hinders the ability of RT and Sputnik to broadcast in the United States.

Last week, RFE/RL filed suit against the Russian government in the *European Court of Human Rights*, alleging that Russia’s actions violate the right to freedom of expression for members of the press protected by Article 10 of the *European Convention on Human Rights*, and that if the Court does not act now, RFE/RL will suffer irreversible harm.

We reiterate our call on the Russian government to end its repression of independent journalists and outlets, including RFE/RL and its affiliates. The people of Russia deserve access to a wide range of information and opinions, and a government that respects freedom of expression in keeping with Russia’s international obligations and OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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