

Statement of Non-Governmental organizations in countries of CIS and Eastern and Central Europe

HUMAN RIGHTS: “NO” TO THE IMMUNITY OF THE STATE

105 signatures from 16 countries

*Released at 2004 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, October 14, 2004*

On July 3, 2004, the Russian Federation, along with other members of the CIS—Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine—issued a statement criticizing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and accusing it of disrespecting their sovereignty. In their joint statement they emphasized that the “OSCE frequently does not observe such fundamental principles as non-interference in the internal affairs, and respect for the sovereignty of nations.”

On July 8, 2004, the Department of Information and Press of the Ministry of International Affairs of Russia made the following comment regarding the statement:

The active development of the humanitarian sector of OSCE activity takes place at the expense of military-political and economic sectors. In addition, the activity in the humanitarian sector most frequently comes down to monitoring the human rights situation and electoral processes. The corresponding evaluations in many cases turn out to be politicized and do not take into consideration the specific character peculiarities and specifics of individual nations.

We, representatives of the nongovernmental organizations of the country-members of the OSCE, express our categorical disagreement with the negative evaluation of OSCE activity in the region and with the approach taken in the official statement by the CIS states and the Russian Ministry of International Affairs, which reminds us of the tactics of Soviet propaganda.

The list of states unsatisfied with the OSCE is not accidental. It is only surprising that the list does not include Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, whose authorities are not less deserving to be among those who ignore criticism of European organizations focused on problems that are not, in fact, internal affairs of any country.

The above stated position of post-Soviet states--where human rights and electoral processes have been increasingly frequently violated and where there is a need for international and civic monitoring-- is extremely dangerous. It is based on these states' disregard for the foundations of international law and the fundamental principles of the Final Act of the Conference for the Security and Co-operation in Europe in 1975 (Helsinki Final Act), the founding document of the OSCE.

It has been three decades since Europe recognized and put into law the connection between European security and respect for human rights. If the CIS leaders recognize the importance of the respect for the rule of law and democratic values, including for purposes of international security, then it is precisely the mutual monitoring of the observance of human rights and the norms of constitutional democracy based on common standards that becomes the most important task of cooperation in the humanitarian sphere.

Attempts to create a barrier against the reactions of the international community to the abuse of power by political leaders in OSCE member states, justified by so-called “peculiarities and specifics of individual nations,” OSCE security agreements, and the joint war against terrorism, is a dangerous and unproductive road. Such rhetoric as the “specific character of individual states” is usually used by leaders who justify violations of human rights on the basis of the “cultural specificities” of the states and who use leadership methods that are far from being democratic. People who suffer from the violation of their rights do not accept such arguments. The most important principle of international affairs ingrained in international legal documents—“respect for human rights is not an internal affair of a state”—must remain unshakable and must be defended.

That is why we consider the statement made by the head of states in Moscow and a follow-up statement made in Astana by the international ministries of the nine CIS countries, where there are quite a few problems in the area of human rights, to be an attempt at “preventative impact” on the OSCE precisely at a time when this important international organization has started paying more serious attention to the manifestations of arbitrariness and lawlessness on the territories of the former USSR.

We appeal to the nongovernmental organizations in Russia and the countries of CIS to support our protest against these positions of their countries and to join this statement and disseminate it widely. We also ask our friends, representatives of the NGOs in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, to support our position and to sign this statement. Only through joint efforts reaching beyond state borders can the citizens and their organizations make a positive impact on the human rights situation and strengthen democratic institutions in the region and in the world.

We call on civil society in countries of the former USSR to find a common position and to prepare concrete suggestions for a coordinated effort with the OSCE and representatives of different government branches that are ready to stand up for European values and mechanisms adopted over 30 years ago and to put them into practice.

We appeal to the NGOs in all country-members of OSCE to support the work of OSCE and to help it further develop its work on strengthening democratic institutions and the defense of human rights, and to find new, more effective approaches in dealing with challenges, including resistance from the governments of OSCE member states.

LIST OF SIGNATORIES

of the Statement of NGOs in the countries of the CIS, Central and Eastern Europe

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Armenia

- Anait Bayandur, Armenian Committee of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Yerevan;
- Mikael Danielian, Helsinki Association, Yerevan.

Albania

- Sotiraq Hroni, Institute for Democracy and Mediation, Tirana.

Azerbaijan

- Ramil Aliev, Azerbaijani Foundation for Protection of Freedom of Speech, Baku;
- Fikret Jafarov, Friends of the Earth-Azerbaijan, Baku;
- Eldar Zeynalov, Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan, Baku;
- Albert Voskanian, Center for Civic Initiatives, Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh.

Belarus

- Boris Zvozdskov, Helsinki-XXI, Minsk;
- Tatiana Pratsko, Belorussian Helsinki Committee, Minsk;
- Valentin Stefanovich, Human Rights Center “Viasna”, Minsk.

Bulgaria

- Gergana Jouleva, Access to Information Programme, Sofia;
- Sasho Petkov, Training and Counseling Center, Sofia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Miralem Tursinovic, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Tuzla.

Croatia

- Suzana Jasic, GONG, Zagreb.

Georgia

- Emil Adelkhanov, member of Amnesty International, Tbilisi;
- Marat Baratashvili, Union of Georgian Repatriates, Tbilisi;
- David Kipiani, Information and Documentation Center for Human Rights, Tbilisi;
- Nodar Sarzhveladze, Foundation for Development of Human Resources, Tbilisi.

Kazakhstan

- Eugeny Zhovtis, Human Rights Bureau, Almaty;
- Kerbez Karimova, Youth Information Service of Kazakhstan, Karaganda;
- Zhangazy Kunserkin, Almaty Helsinki Committee, Almaty;
- Nurbulat Masanov, Kazakhstan Association of Political Science, Almaty.

Kyrgyzstan

- Aziza Abdirasulova, Human Rights NGO "Kylym Shamy", Bishkek;
- Edil Baisalov, Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, Bishkek;
- Valery Uleev, Human Rights Organization "Justice", Jalal-Abad.

Moldova

- Grigory Volovoy, Center for Human Rights Protection in Transdnestria, Bendery, Transdnestria, Moldova.

Poland

- Pawel Kazanetsky, East European Democracy Center, Warsaw.

Russia

- Maxim Abrakhimov, Caucasian Youth Human Rights League, Stavropol;
- Vasily Adrianov, Youth for Democracy and Reforms, Kaliningrad;
- Irina Alexeeva, PhD, Moscow;
- German Aletkin, Center for Peace and Human Rights Actions, Kazan;
- Boris Baranov, Center for Protection of Constitutional Rights and Freedoms of Citizens, Sochi;
- Sergey Belyaev, Human Rights Academy, Ekaterinburg;
- Alexander Bekhtold, Khabarovsk Regional Chapter of the All-Russian Movement "For Human Rights", Khabarovsk;
- Andrey Blinushov, "Memorial" Society, Interregional Group "Human Rights Network", Ryazan;
- Valery Borshev, Moscow Helsinki Group, Moscow;
- Maxim Burmitsky, Human Rights Center of South Kuzbass, Novokuznetsk;
- Alexander Verkhovsky, Information and Analytical Center "Sova", Moscow;
- Konstantin Vishnevsky, Center for Public Initiatives "Alter Vita", Stavropol;
- Svetlana Gannushkina, "Civic Assistance" Committee, Human Rights Center "Memorial", Moscow;
- Alexander Gerashenko, Moscow;
- Valentin Gefer, Institute for Human Rights, Moscow;
- Artur Gorbatov, Inter-Regional Roma Association in the Southern Federal District, Volgograd;
- Eugeny Grekov, Creative Union "Southern Wave", Krasnodar;

- Vasily Gusliannikov, Mordovian Republican Human Rights Center, Saransk;
- Yuri Dzhibladze, Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Moscow;
- Iosiph Dzyloshinsky, Human Rights Foundation "Commission on Access to Information", Moscow;
- Nadezhda Donovskaya, "Veche", Pskov;
- Venedikt Dostavalov, Pskov Regional Public Movement "Veche", Pskov;
- Dmitry Dubrovsky, European University in Saint Petersburg, Saint Petersburg;
- Semen Zhavoronkov, Institute of Problems of Globalization, Moscow;
- Alexander Kalikh, "Memorial" Society, Perm;
- Andrey Kalikh, All-Russian NGO Coalition «For a Democratic Alternative Civil Service», Moscow;
- Vadim Karastelev, "Frodo", Novorossiysk;
- Tamara Karasteleva, Novorossiysk Human Rights Committee, Novorossiysk;
- Veronika Katkova, Institute of Social Problems "United Europe", Oryol;
- Natalya Kravchuk, Moscow Helsinki Group, Moscow;
- Dmitry Krayukhin, Institute of Social Problems "United Europe", Oryol;
- Boris Kreyndel, Public Commission on Human Rights in Tomsk Region, Tomsk Regional Anti-Fascist Committee, Tomsk;
- Vladimir Lagutov, Ecological Movement "Green Don", Novochoerkassk;
- Alexander Lashmankin, Valter Benjamin Libertarian Group, Samara;
- Leonid Limberik, Saint Petersburg Family Center "Red Flower", Saint Petersburg;
- Svetlana Lepeshkina, Saint Petersburg Family Center "Red Flower", Saint Petersburg;
- Tatiana Lozhkina, Karagai Human Rights Center, Karagai, Perm Region;
- Tatiana Lokshina, Moscow Helsinki Group, Center "Demos", Moscow;
- Pavel Marakulin, Far East Federation of Consultants, Vladivostok;
- Tatiana Mikhailova, Soldiers' Mothers Committee of Oryol Region, Livny;
- Vladimir Panteleev, Nizhny Novgorod Society of Victims of Communist Terror, Nizhny Novgorod;
- Lev Ponomarev, All-Russian Movement "For Human Rights", Moscow;
- Vadim Postnikov, Tyumen Chapter of All-Russian Movement "For Human Rights", Tyumen;
- Boris Pustyntsev, Citizens' Watch, Saint Petersburg;
- Alexander Radevich, Center for Social and Educational Initiatives, Izhevsk;
- Alexandra Savvina, Novochoerkassk Chapter of All-Russian Movement "For Human Rights", Novochoerkassk;
- Galina Selina, Lipetsk Regional NGO "Arc", Lipetsk;
- Alexander Semenenko, Stavropol Regional Human Rights Center, Stavropol;
- Natalya Serdyukova, Sochi City Soldiers' Mothers Committee, Sochi;
- Julia Sereda, Ryazan Human Rights Society "Memorial", Ryazan;
- Anton Silinin, Association of Young Physicists and Chemists "Spectrum", Kemerovo;
- Boris Stelmashek, "House 28", Archangelsk;
- Natalya Taubina, «Public Verdict» Foundation, "For Civil Society" Foundation, Moscow;
- Maxim Terlyaev, Civic Education Club, Ulianovsk;
- Valery Tkachuk, "Human Intellectual Development", Voronezh;
- Alexander Torokhov, Ekaterinburg Roma National-Cultural Autonomy, Ekaterinburg;
- Nikolay Utkov, City NGO of the Disabled "Chernobyl", Zlatoust;

- Dmitry Fedorov, Center for Support of Public Initiatives, Cheboksary;
- Emma Feldshtein, Dzherzhinsk Human Rights Center, Dzherzhinsk, Nizhny Novgorod Region;
- Vyacheslav Feraposhkin, Human Rights Center “Choice of Conscience”, Sasovo, Ryazan Region;
- Gusman Khalilov, Public Movement “Bulgarian National Congress”, Kazan;
- Nikolay Khramov, Liberal and Libertarian Movement “Russian Radicals”, Moscow;
- Darya Tsybulskaya, Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Moscow;
- Anna Sharogradskaya, Institute of Regional Press, Saint Petersburg;
- Olga Shepeleva, Center “Demos”, Moscow;
- Alexandser Eisman, Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Moscow.

Turkmenistan

- Andrey Aranbaev, Ecological Club CATENA, International Socio-Ecological Union, Ashgabat.

Uzbekistan

- Aidzhakhon Zainabitdinov, Andizhan Regional Human Rights Society “Appellation”, Andizhan;
- Nozima Kamalova, Legal Aid Society, Tashkent.

Ukraine

- Elena Volochay; All-Ukrainian Association of Judges; Kiev;
- Sergey Volochay; “For Professional Service” NGO (International Alliance of Professional Service to Public Initiatives – IAPS); Kiev;
- Vladimir Kaplun; Kharkov Human Rights Group; Kharkov;
- Andrey Matrosov; Kherson City Association of Journalists “South”, Kherson;
- Alexey Tarasov; Chernigov Public Committee for Human Rights; Chernigov;
- Alla Tyutyunnik; Kherson Regional Foundation of Mercy and Health, Kherson;
- Vladimir Cheremis, Ukrainian Helsinki Union for Human Rights, Kiev;
- Anzhela Cherkasova; “For Professional Service” NGO, Komsomolsk, Poltava Region;
- Alexander Shevchenko; “Helsinki-90” Committee of All-Ukrainian Society of Political Prisoners and the Repressed; Kiev.