



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Human Rights Situation in Russia**

As delivered by Political Counselor Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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Developments inside Russia continue to demonstrate the connection between the Kremlin's repression at home and its brutal aggression against Ukraine. On March 16, Russian authorities finally began their politically motivated trial of opposition politician Vladimir Kara-Murza, nearly 11 months after he was first detained and subsequently charged for his criticism of Russia's brutal war. Distressingly, his trial had to be postponed due to his deteriorating health. Russian authorities should release Kara-Murza immediately, ensure he receives all necessary medical attention, and drop these unjust and fabricated charges.

We also remember the more than 540 other political prisoners currently languishing in Russia's custody. Dozens continue to be held in connection with their accurate reporting on or criticism of Russia's brutal war of aggression, including Moscow city council deputy Aleksey Gorinov, journalist Maria Ponomarenko, and opposition politician Ilya Yashin. Nor have we forgotten Aleksey Navalny, who last week was reportedly sent to a punishment cell for the twelfth time, ostensibly for "introducing himself incorrectly."

The Kremlin's targeting of Kara-Murza and other political prisoners is not taking place in isolation, but rather reflects a comprehensive effort to silence all dissenting voices in Russia's society by eliminating independent media and closing human rights organizations. In just the last week:

- The Kremlin carried out raids against the Nobel prize-winning organization Memorial and its leadership on spurious charges.
- The Kremlin brought a case to liquidate the NGO SOVA Center, which works on issues of xenophobia, violent nationalism, repression of freedom of religion or belief, and Russian authorities' misuse of anti-extremism laws.
- And, the Kremlin continued its endless designation of civil society leaders and independent organizations as "foreign agents."

What is the Kremlin afraid of? Why is the Kremlin silencing Russia's own civil society? We call on Russia to honor its OSCE human dimension commitments, release political prisoners, and stop its assault on fundamental freedoms in Russia.

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