



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# On the Further Deterioration of the Human Rights Situation in Russia

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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As Russia wages its unconscionable war of aggression against Ukraine, it is vital that we do not forget about the Kremlin's ongoing crackdown against its own citizens which directly enables the war, as my Norwegian colleague just discussed. Opposition figure Alexei Navalny said yesterday that he had not had any visits for 8 months and was told that he'd be transferred to a solitary isolation facility for the maximum possible term of 6 months. Navalny went on to tweet that, "No visits are allowed there. This means more than a year without a visit. Even maniacs and serial killers serving life sentences have the right to receive a visit, but I don't."

The Kremlin's efforts to silence Navalny are part of a broader effort to limit the ability of the people of Russia to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Just last week, on January 25, a Moscow court ruled to close the Moscow Helsinki Group, Russia's oldest human rights organization and the inspiration for citizens' groups monitoring human rights throughout the OSCE region and indeed around the world. Last week, Moscow authorities also informed the Sakharov Center, which works to preserve the legacy of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Andrei Sakharov and protect voices of conscience, that it would be evicted from its offices. The recent designations of the U.S.-based Andrei Sakharov Foundation and the Latvia-based independent news outlet Meduza as "undesirable" effectively outlaw their activities in Russia.

Yesterday, on February 1, Russia continued its attack on freedom of speech with a Moscow court sentencing journalist Alexander Nevzorov in absentia to eight years in prison for posting the truth on social media about Russia's shelling of a maternity hospital in Mariupol. Opposition politician Ilya Yashin was sentenced in December to eight and a half years in prison under the same law, and another brave member of the opposition, Vladimir Kara-Murza, remains in custody, separated from his family under the same bogus charges. They were all targeted for speaking the truth. These repressive actions are only the most recent examples of Putin's intensifying campaign to cut off sources of information and civil society activism the Kremlin doesn't control.

All OSCE participating States have committed to respect the right to exercise freedom of expression and association. We commend the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and

Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) for speaking out against Russia's latest contraventions of its OSCE commitments. We stand with Russia's brave human rights defenders, civil society activists, independent journalists, and pro-democracy advocates. We call on Russia to release the more than 500 political prisoners it holds, including those who are unjustly incarcerated for expressing views which challenge Putin's false narratives about his brutal war of choice against Ukraine. We urge Russia to stop its unrelenting repression of human rights and fundamental freedoms in violation of international law and in contravention of the Helsinki Final Act.

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