

International Civic Solidarity Platform Condemns the Recent Defamation of Russian Environmentalist Andrey Rudomakha and Demands His Safety is Ensured

Statement

September 25, 2019

We, members of international Civic Solidarity Platform, condemn the recent efforts to defame Andrey Rudomakha, coordinator of Environmental Watch on the North Caucasus, and demand that his safety is ensured.

On September 19, 2019, anonymous libelous posters claiming that Andrey Rudomakha is a pedophile were plastered around the city of Krasnodar, Russia. These posters also included libelous information about Environmental Watch. The posters contained photographs of Rudomakha, included his home address, and called to put an end to his allegedly illegal activity. We are concerned that these actions will result in additional threats to Rudomakha and other members of Environmental Watch, including physical violence.

This obvious and disgusting attempt to defame Rudomakha is extremely troubling, particularly following the raids of Environmental Watch's office early in the morning on September 12, July 30, and April 9, 2019 by the authorities, carrying automatic weapons and wearing balaclavas. In both the July and April raids, equipment, including computers, flash drives, and mobile phones were confiscated, as well as the organization's files. Members of EWNC, including Rudomakha, were treated brutally by those who raided the office, and damage was done to the door and furniture. These are only the raids that happened this year; serious harassment of the organization has been ongoing for at least the past ten years.

Earlier, on December 28, 2017, Andrey Rudomakha was brutally beaten by masked attackers as he returned from an environmental inspection. Rudomakha spent over two weeks in the hospital recovering from his injuries, which included a fractured skull, concussion, a broken nose, and severe dental damage. His attackers remain at large even though the incident was recorded on EWNC's security camera and provided to the police.

On January 9, 2018, less than two weeks following the attack, Rudomakha and Environmental Watch's deputy director, Dmitry Shevchenko, received death threats sent by email from the address smertrudomakhe@gmail.com.

At the same time that the libelous posters were placed around Krasnodar on September 19, an anonymous petition was circulated on the online platform Change.org, requesting signatures to remove Rudomakha from the environmental council of the Governor of Krasnodar Krai.

The recent libelous statements about Andrey Rudomakha discredit his honor and dignity, damage his reputation, and violate his rights, including his right to personal security, privacy, and right to freedom of association. This latest effort at character assassination places Rudomakha once again at great risk of personal violence and must be stopped.

We demand that the Russian authorities provide protection to Rudomakha, go after those who are harassing him, and stop the repression of Rudomakha and other members of Environmental Watch on the North Caucasus.

We call on the international community to demand respect for human rights among environmental and human rights defenders by the authorities in the Russian Federation and states across the OSCE region.

We as members of the Civic Solidarity Platform state our solidarity with and support for Andrey Rudomakha and all members of Environmental Watch on the North Caucasus.

Signed,

1. Kate Watters, Crude Accountability, USA
2. Yuri Dzhibladze, Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Russia
3. Giorgi Marjanishvili, Center for Participation and Development, Georgia
4. Ivar Dale, Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Norway
5. Uranija Pirovska, Macedonian Helsinki Committee, Macedonia
6. Mushegh Yekmalyan, World Organization Against Torture (OMCT)
7. Tatyana Zinovich, Legal Policy Research Centre, Kazakhstan
8. Erika Leonaite, Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Lithuania
9. Sergei Davidis, Human Rights Center Memorial, Russia
10. Andrea Menapace, Italian Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights (CILD), Italy

11. Krassimir Kanev, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Bulgaria
12. Pepijn Gerrits, Netherlands Helsinki Committee, the Netherlands
13. Tolekan Ismailova, Human Rights Movement "Bir Duino," Kyrgyzstan
14. Anna Schreilechner, Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit (ZARA), Austria
15. Matthias Hui, humanrights.ch, Switzerland
16. Ales Bialiatski, Human Rights Center "Viasna," Belarus
17. Svetlana Astrakhantseva, Moscow Helsinki Group, Russia
18. Avetik Ishkhanyan, Helsinki Committee of Armenia
19. Tim Bohse and Stefan Melle, German-Russian Exchange (DRA), Germany
20. Yevgeniy Zhovtis, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Kazakhstan
21. Alex Postica, Promo LEX, Moldova
22. Lenur Kerymov, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland
23. Rasul Jafarov, Human Rights Club, Azerbaijan
24. Brigitte Dufour, International Partnership for Human Rights, Belgium
25. Elena Shakhova, Citizens' Watch, Russia
26. Oleksandra Matviychuk, Center for Civil Liberties, Ukraine
27. Natalia Taubina, Public Verdict Foundation, Russia
28. Valentina Cherevatenko, Women of the Don, Russia
29. Sardar Bagishbekov, Public Foundation "Golos Svobody," Kyrgyzstan
30. Artur Sakunts, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor, Armenia
31. Alexander Verkhovsky, Sova Center for Information and Analysis, Russia
32. Anara Ibrayeva, Public Association "Dignity," Kazakhstan
33. Olga Romanenko, The Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House, Lithuania

The Civic Solidarity Platform is a network of independent civic groups from across the OSCE region, bringing together non-governmental organizations, activists and experts committed to improving the situation with human rights, rule of law, and democratic institutions in Europe, Eurasia and North America. Its aim is to serve as a conduit through which civic activists can build alliances, strengthen mutual support and solidarity, and improve their influence on national and international human rights policy. For more information, please visit <http://civicsolidarity.org>