

Act now to make Germany act!

Welcome to the EU campaign pages of Amnesty International in Germany. During the six months in which Germany is holding the EU Presidency, AI Germany, with help from all other Amnesty sections, is undertaking a range of measures to impress on the German government the importance of the EU working proactively to defend human rights worldwide.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about a number of human rights issues in Russia:

Human rights defenders do not receive the protection they need. President Putin's first reaction to the political murder of Anna Politkovskaya appeared cynical: he suggested that the journalist's death had done more harm to the government than her reportage. Putin's words made clear yet again that the Kremlin does not have the political will to protect those who work for human rights, or to publicly support their work - regardless of any differences of opinion.

Arbitrary detention, "disappearances" and torture continue in Chechnya and neighbouring areas even if these events no longer receive widespread media attention. Individual victims, their relatives, lawyers and human rights activists trying to seek justice through the courts and campaign for change have themselves faced harassment, arbitrary detention and torture and in some cases have "disappeared" or have been killed. The perpetrators of even grave abuses of human rights, on the other hand, are very rarely brought to justice.

According to the Sova Institute of Research in January and February 2007 **at least 15 people were murdered in racist attacks in Russia – three times as many as in the same period last year.** At least a further 67 people were injured in racist attacks. The real figures are probably higher, because often racist crimes are not reported to the police or, if reported, are not registered as racist violence. There has been some official recognition of racism, both in terms of racist attacks by non-state actors, and also by individual police officers, including the increase in number of prosecutions citing racial hatred. However, the official reaction has been far from adequate. The victims of racist attacks are foreign students and asylum seekers from around the world as well as people from the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The new NGO law, which came into force in April 2006, poses a number of problems for both local, foreign and international organizations operating in Russia. The law and the regulations which are used in its implementation make very close government scrutiny of NGOs possible, and the extensive reporting requirements they require means that NGOs have much less time to spend on actually doing their real substantive work. The law was applied for the first time in October 2006 to ban the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society.

The European Union regularly interacts with Russian officials at different levels, for example at the biannual human rights consultations, and at high-level summits at both heads-of-state and governmental level.

Amnesty International calls on the German EU Presidency to use the human rights consultations on May 3rd to insist that the Russian authorities address the deteriorating human rights situation in the country.

The killing of Anna Politkovskaya is a dramatic reminder of the risks that journalists live with when they make use of their right of free speech, and a worrying indication of the limits placed on freedom of expression in Russia. Amnesty International asks the EU Presidency to reiterate its demand that Russia comply with its international obligations with respect to freedom of expression. Amnesty International calls on the EU Presidency to raise these concerns not only during the EU-Russia human rights consultations, but also during the forthcoming EU-Russia summit on May 18th. It is the responsibility of elected governments to ensure that human rights standards are upheld by their administration.

The German, Portuguese and Slovenian governments have stated in their programme for the EU Trio Presidency that one of their priorities will be a better-harmonized implementation of the EU human rights guidelines.

The EU would be betraying its own core values if it failed, when given the chance, to raise serious and urgent human rights issues with its partners. If Russia wants to be a leading player on the international scene, then it has to accept scrutiny and constructive criticism of its human rights record.

Click [here](#) to access the form to send a letter to the German Minister of Foreign Affairs.

PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN OUR CAMPAIGN BY SENDING A LETTER TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Herrn Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier
Bundesminister des Auswärtigen
Auswärtiges Amt
Werderscher Markt 1
10117 Berlin
Germany

Human Rights abuses in Russia

Dear Mr Steinmeier,

The German, Portuguese and Slovenian governments have stated in their programme for the EU Trio Presidency that one of their priorities will be a better-harmonized implementation of the EU human rights guidelines. It is now time to walk the talk!

The human rights consultations on 8 May, and the EU - Russia summit, provide an opportunity to insist that the Russian authorities address the deteriorating human rights situation in their country.

I therefore ask you to urge the Russian authorities:

- to dispel the climate of impunity for serious human rights violations in Chechnya, by effectively prosecuting all those responsible;
- to provide immediate and effective protection for all human rights defenders;
- to end the use of administrative and judicial sanctions to obstruct civil society activists and non-governmental organisations;
- to ensure that all racially motivated attacks are registered properly by the police and are effectively prosecuted;
- to comply with their international obligations to protect human rights, especially with respect to freedom of expression.

Yours sincerely,

Privacy policy:

Amnesty International will present the German Foreign Minister, Mr Frank-Walter Steinmeier, with the petition containing all signatories.

Thank you for participating in this online petition.