

16 November 2021

## **Russia: The Prosecutor’s General Office moves to permanently shut down both International Memorial and Human Rights Centre “Memorial”**

On 11 November 2021, the **International Historical and Human Rights Society ‘Memorial’ (International Memorial)** received a notice from the Supreme Court of Russian Federation, stating that the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Russian Federation filed a motion to permanently shut down the association citing systemic violation of the “foreign agents” law. The court hearing is scheduled for 25 November 2021. On the same day, **Human Rights Center “Memorial” (HRC “Memorial”)** received a confirmation that the Prosecutor’s Office in Moscow filed a motion to the Moscow City Court to permanently shut down the HRC Memorial; the date of the hearing is not yet confirmed.

[International Memorial](#) is an association of human rights initiatives founded in 1989 to preserve the societal memory of the severe political persecution in the former Soviet Republics. International Memorial conducts research and engages in educational activities, monitoring and documenting human rights violations, as well as providing social and legal counselling for refugees, displaced persons, political prisoners, their families, and other discriminated groups. In recognition of its human rights work, International Memorial was awarded the Victor Gollancz Prize, the Hermann Kesten Prize, the Pax Christi International award, and Max van der Stoel Award. In 2006-2011 Memorial was repeatedly nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

[HRC “Memorial”](#) is a human rights organisation that provides legal assistance to victims of gross human rights violations and is involved in human rights education, research and publications. HRC Memorial is particularly active in the North Caucasus and has regional offices in Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria

In their motions, both the Prosecutor General’s Office and the Prosecutor’s office in Moscow claimed that International Memorial and HRC “Memorial” and its leadership repeatedly failed to comply with the demands of the Part 2.1 of the Federal Law 272-FZ “On measures of influence on persons involved in violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms, rights and freedoms of citizens of the Russian Federation,” also known as the “foreign agents: law, in particular, refused to mark their publications as the ones of the foreign agent. The notorious discriminatory law has been continuously used by Russian authorities to interfere with the work and silence civil society actors and human rights defenders in Russia.

Front Line Defenders condemns judicial harassment of International Memorial and HRC “Memorial” by the state actors and believes that this harassment is due to peaceful human rights work of both civil society actors. Front Line Defenders expresses grave concerns about the Prosecutor’s General Office’s of the Russian Federation motion to shut down International Memorial and HRC “Memorial.” Front Line Defenders reiterates its concern regarding the set of “foreign agents” laws currently existing in the Russian legal framework, as it places human rights defenders under increased risk and further hampers their peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

**Front Line Defenders urges the Russian authorities to:**

1. Cease persecution of International Memorial and HRC “Memorial” for their peaceful human rights work and retract the motion to permanently shut down both civil society organisations;
2. Abolish the discriminatory “foreign agents” law;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Indonesia are able to carry out their human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, in line with Indonesia’s international human rights obligations and commitments.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 5: “For the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels: (a) To meet or assemble peacefully” (b) To form, join and participate in non-governmental organizations, associations or groups (c) To communicate with non-governmental or intergovernmental organizations.”

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Anderson

Executive Director