

6 November 2019

## Russia: Supreme Court of Russia decides to liquidate “For Human Rights” movement

On 1 November 2019, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation ruled in favour of the Russian Ministry of Justice’ request to liquidate the “For Human Rights” movement. Early in October 2019, the Ministry of Justice filed a lawsuit against the movement for “multiple constitutional violations”.

“[For Human Rights](#)” is a Russian human rights movement founded by human rights defender [Lev Ponomarev](#) which provides free legal, social and humanitarian assistance to victims of human rights violations.

On 8 October 2019, the Ministry of Justice filed a lawsuit at the Supreme Court of Russia requesting the liquidation of “For Human Rights”. The Ministry made the request on the basis that there were “administrative irregularities” that conflicted with the “foreign agents” law, resulting in “multiple constitutional violations”. In addition, the movement’s charter was argued not to comply with the 2014 amendments to the Civil Code. Representatives of the “For Human Rights” movement requested an extension to amend their charter, arguing that the it was approved before the amendments came into force. The Ministry of Justice did not respond to their request.

In February 2019, “For Human Rights” was placed on the government’s register of “foreign agents” for the second time. The movement had already been placed on the register in 2014, but was removed a year later. In the last two months, “For Human Rights” has been fined five times for not stating its “foreign agent” status in publications on its website, on Facebook and in the media, therefore violating the “foreign agents” law. On 7 December 2018, the Ministry of Justice received a request from the General Prosecution to conduct an off-schedule investigation into “For Human Rights”. The request came a day after Lev Ponomarev was [arrested for 25 days](#) for taking part in a solidarity campaign supporting the prosecuted members of of “Set” and “Novoe velichie”.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by the Supreme Court’s decision to liquidate human rights movement “For Human Rights”. Front Line Defenders strongly believes that the Supreme Court’s sentence is disproportionate to the violations of the movement and that the “foreign agents” law is used arbitrarily by authorities to suppress human rights work in Russia.

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

1. Reverse the suspension of the “For Human Rights” movement, as Front Line Defenders believes the it has been targeted solely as a result of its legitimate human rights activities;
2. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Russia and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.

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 attention to Article 12 (1): “(1) *Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of*

*human rights and fundamental freedoms” and to Article 18 (2): “Individuals, groups, and non-governmental organisations have an important role to play and a responsibility in safeguarding democracy, promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and contributing to the promotion and advancement of democratic societies, institutions and processes.”*

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue background behind it.

Andrew Anderson

Executive Director