

4 November 2019

Russia: Memorial's Perm office and house of its chairman searched

On 31 October 2019, agents from the Centre for Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Extremism, the Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation searched **Memorial's** office in the city of Perm as well as the house of its chairman **Robert Latypov**. The searches were conducted in connection with an investigation into alleged illegal tree felling by the organisation.

[Memorial](#), or International Memorial, is a non-profit organisation which investigates and researches political repression which took place in the USSR and ongoing repression in present-day Russia. It assists in the moral and legal rehabilitation of persons subjected to those political repressions.

On 31 October 2019, the day following the National Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Political Repressions, the Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Extremism Centre, the Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Security Service of Russia conducted searches in Memorial's Perm-based office and in the house of its chairman Robert Latypov. Work at the organisation was disrupted as several computers, financial and other organisational documents, and a notebook were seized. The searches were conducted after a criminal case on illegal tree felling was opened in connection with Memorial's expedition in summer 2019 to Galyashor and Velva-Bazab in the Perm region. In August 2019, Memorial's employees and volunteers went on expedition to clean up a monument devoted to persecuted Lithuanians and Poles in Galyashor village. In October 2019, the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Perm region fined Memorial 200 000 RUB (approx. 2 815 EUR) and its chairman Robert Latypov 50 000 RUB (approx. 700 EUR) for "unauthorized occupation of forest plots". Several Lithuanian citizens were also fined.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned at the searches carried out in Memorial's office and in the house of its chairman Robert Latypov. It believes that the constant pressure on the human rights organisation and its employees is aimed at discouraging them from carrying out their legitimate and peaceful human rights work in Russia.

Front Line Defenders urges the Russian authorities to:

1. Immediately cease all further harassment of Memorial in Perm and its employees, as Front Line believes that the searches carried out were solely as a result of their legitimate work in defence of human rights;
2. Return all items and documents confiscated during the search, as they are manifestly not linked to any criminal activity;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Russia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions;

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".

Andrew Anderson

Executive Director