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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on murder of human rights activists

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on murder of human rights activists

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, and in particular to that of 25 October 2006 on the murder of the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, that of 19 June 2008 on EU-Russia Summit of 26-27 June 2008 in Khanty-Mansiysk and that of 17 December 2008 on attacks on human rights defenders in Russia and the Anna Politkovskaya murder trial,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the Russian Federation, which entered into force in 1997 and has been extended until a new agreement replaces it,
 - having regard to the ongoing negotiations for a new agreement providing a new comprehensive framework for EU-Russia relations, and to the re-launch of those negotiations during the last EU-Russia Summit in November 2008,
 - having regard to the 2008 report of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on human rights defenders,
 - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas Russia is a member state of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that has committed itself to fully respecting human and citizens' rights;
- B. Whereas there are serious concerns about the situation of human rights defenders and about difficulties faced by NGOs active in the promotion of human rights;
- C. Whereas the murders of human rights defenders in Russia in the last 12 months has been carried out with apparent impunity and illustrate the vulnerability and the lack of protection afforded to Russian human rights defenders;
- D. Whereas Natalia Estemirova, a leading human rights defender in Chechnya who tried to publicize grave and continuing human rights abuses and had exposed alleged rights abuses by the forces of Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov in Chechnya, was found shot dead in Ingushetia on 15 July 2009;
- E. Whereas Zarema Sadulayeva and her husband, Alik Dzhabrailov, who worked for the Save the Generation charity, which worked to provide prosthetic limbs, surgical operations, counselling, and rehabilitation to orphans and other children who have suffered psychologically and physically from the war, were found dead in the trunk of their car on 10 August 2009, a day after they were kidnapped;

- F. Whereas Andrei Kulagin who led the human rights organisation 'Justice' (Spravedlivost) in the north-western part of Russia in Karelia and was particularly known for efforts to improve the treatment of inmates in Russian prisons, was found dead on 10 July;
- G. Whereas according to an Amnesty International report the continuing indiscriminate killings, human rights violations, excessive use of force, death and torture in custody, arbitrary and secret detention, abductions, threats to human rights activists and independent journalists, the targeting of relatives of suspected fighters and the forced evictions of internally displaced people are taking place in Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria;
- H. Whereas the Russian authorities systematically and continuingly fail to effectively investigate the murders of human rights activists and others human rights violations that have taken place over the past years;
- I. Whereas that the Russian civilian population continues to face an atmosphere of lawlessness that engenders fear and insecurity;
- J. Whereas all Partnership and Cooperation Agreements provide for the respect of democracy, the principles of international law and human rights;
1. Strongly condemns all the killings and abductions of human rights activists, lawyers and journalists in Russia and particularly those working in the North Caucasus where the climate of impunity is all-pervasive;
 2. Expresses firm condemnation of the recent murders of the human rights defender Zarema Sadulayeva and her husband Alik Dzhabrailov in Chechnya on 10 August, Nataliya Estemirova on 15 July 2009 and Andrei Kulagin found dead on 10 July, which follows a series of killings of human rights defenders in Russia, including Anna Politkovskaya in 2006, Stanislav Markelov in January 2009;
 3. Calls upon the Russian authorities to order an immediate, thorough and transparent investigation into the assassinations of Zarema Sadulayeva, Alik Dzhrabrailov, Nataliya Estemirova and Andrei Kulagin in order to identify the perpetrators, bring them to justice and punish the guilty;
 4. Is deeply concerned by the ongoing climate of fear faced by human rights defenders in the Russian Federation and the rising level of violence in the North Caucasus, where, over the past months, several human rights defenders have been killed;
 5. Expresses its deep concern at the human rights situation in Russia particularly the increasingly frequent attacks on ethnic, racial and religious minorities in Russia;
 6. Stresses that the Russian authorities' passivity in conducting effective investigations of human defenders' murders is a strong indication that they are at least acquiescent to these crimes;

7. Calls upon the Russian authorities to guarantee the protection of all human rights defenders in the country and to put an end to all acts of harassment or attacks against human rights defenders in the Russian Federation;
8. Calls upon the Russian authorities to ensure in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international and regional human rights instruments ratified by the Russian Federation;
9. Calls on the Council and the Commission to put pressure on the Russian authorities to put an end to this climate of judicial impunity;
10. Stresses that the impunity in Chechnya leads to destabilization across the whole North-Caucasus region;
11. Points out that human rights, the rule of law and democracy must remain core issues for the further development of EU-Russia relations; stresses the importance of the continuous exchange of views on human rights with Russia as part of the EU-Russia human rights consultation;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the government and parliament of the Russian Federation, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.