



Plenary sitting

B9-0608/2021

14.12.2021

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on **continuous crackdown on civil society and human rights defenders in Russia: the case of human rights organisation Memorial**
(2021/3018(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

European Parliament resolution on continuous crackdown on civil society and human rights defenders in Russia: the case of human rights organisation Memorial (2021/3018(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia,
 - having regard to its recommendation of 16 September 2021 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the direction of EU-Russia political relations,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the deliberations in the European Parliament on the 30th Anniversary of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its importance to the future of Russia and Europe,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas prosecutors in Russia have demanded the liquidation of the International Historical Educational Charity and Human Rights Society Memorial (hereinafter – International Memorial) and the Human Rights Centre Memorial, on the grounds of their alleged repeated non-compliance with the legislation governing the activities of non-commercial organisations receiving foreign funding, known as the “foreign agents” law; Human Rights Centre is also charged with justifying the activities of extremist and terrorist organisations; whereas the judge ordered a recess until the middle of December 2021;
- B. whereas International Memorial and the Human Rights Centre Memorial (winner of the 2009 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought) are one of the oldest and most prominent human rights organisations in Russia, and a symbol of the relentless fight for freedom, democracy and human rights in the post-Soviet area and beyond;
- C. whereas the collective memory of political terror in the Soviet Union is inseparable from building the future of a democratic Russia and Europe;
- D. whereas inability of Russia to come to terms with its past and to evaluate the crimes committed in and by the USSR leads to continuation of Soviet legacy of aggressive policies by the Russian authorities today;

- E. whereas Memorial was formally established in January 1989 as an international historical and civil rights society, the first honorary chairman of which was Andrei Sakharov;
 - F. whereas today Memorial is a centralised organisation with more than 60 branches and affiliated organisations which have documented many historical facts related to the Stalin crimes and Gulags, and among other initiatives it has established the Virtual Museum of the Gulag;
 - G. whereas President Putin in his attempts to destroy Memorial is pursuing the Kremlin's policy of revisionism and praise to Stalin's tyranny and in this way is waging the war against the liberal freedoms and open society in Russia;
 - H. whereas the publication by Memorial of the list of political prisoners in Russia is a reminder for the authorities of the failure to protect the basic rights of their citizens, whereas the current number of political prisoners stands at 426 and continues to grow;
 - I. whereas the crackdown on civil society and human rights defenders in Russia continues; whereas the EU has imposed sanctions on persons and entities from Russia involved in serious human rights violations and abuses, under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime;
 - J. whereas Russian opposition politician and anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny has been awarded the 2021 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought;
- 1. Deplores the decision by Russian prosecutors to demand the liquidation of the International Memorial and the Human Rights Centre Memorial on the grounds of their legitimate work, and that the Russian authorities consider the work of Human Rights Memorial Centre as equivalent to "extremist" and "terrorist" activities;
 - 2. Urges the Russian authorities to reverse this decision, and to stop the ongoing crackdown on civil society, human rights defenders and independent media in the Russian Federation; welcomes the awarding of the 2021 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Alexei Navalny; calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all those unjustly imprisoned for political reasons, including Alexei Navalny;
 - 3. Stresses that dissolving International Memorial and the Human Rights Centre Memorial would have significant negative consequences for civil society as a whole and human rights protection in Russia in particular; underlines that the liquidation will also bring an end to the unique databases, collections of documents and therefore invites the European Commission and the EEAS to produce the comprehensive report together with the civil society and human rights experts of Russia on the living memory of thousands and millions of victims of political terror in the Soviet Union, which would be based on the witness recordings and databases collected by the Memorial;
 - 4. Beliefs that the databases are a unique heritage of humanity and not a possession of the Russian authorities; stresses that it is paramount that they are protected, preserved and continue to be available for all those interested, students, researchers and families of victims;

5. Underlines that the "foreign agents" law falls short of international and European human rights standards, and is against the international obligations of the Russian Federation; urges the Russian authorities to repeal the law without delay;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the President, Government and the State Duma of the Russian Federation.