



Plenary sitting

B9-0186/2022

5.4.2022

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 **the increasing repression in Russia, including the case of Alexey Navalny**
(2022/2622(RSP))

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on behalf of the Renew Group

B9-0186/2022

European Parliament resolution on the increasing repression in Russia, including the case of Alexey Navalny (2022/2622(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia,
 - having regard to the statement of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights on 24 March 2022 expressing appreciation for the courageous work of journalists and human rights defenders including those from the Russian Federation and Belarus,
 - having regard to the statement by the OSCE Media Freedom Representative on 3 March 2022 on the serious infringement of the right to freedom of expression and media freedom in Russia in the context of the country's military attack against Ukraine,
 - having regard to the declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the ruling to extend Alexey Navalny's politically motivated imprisonment by an additional 9 years, on 22 March 2022,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since Russia started its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, Russian police have arrested more than 15.000 people who participate in peaceful anti-war protests, using excessive force during detention, in some cases degrading treatment and acts of torture;
- B. whereas according to the Committee to Protect Journalists at least seven journalists have died in a line of duty covering Russia's invasion of Ukraine thus far: Russian journalist Oksana Baulina, Irish cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski, Ukrainian journalists Maks Levin and Oleksandra Kuvshynova, and cameraman Evgeny Sakun, US documentary filmmaker Brent Renaud and Lithuanian documentary filmmaker Mantas Kvedaravičius, and more were seriously wounded;
- C. whereas the Russia Duma passed a series of legal provisions aimed at tightening the information space by severely censoring the independent war reporting, as the authorities introduced a criminal liability and imprisonment of up to 15 years for such reporting as they are considered to spread "fake" information about the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation; whereas on 4 March 2022, the Russian Duma also banned demonstration against the war in Ukraine;
- D. whereas anyone discussing the war online and offline, or mentioning the words "war", "military operation" and "invasion" or calling for "peace" would commit offences with "aggravating circumstances", and therefore may be subjected to harsher sentences, prosecution and jail; whereas anyone gathering and publicizing data and imagery on

violations of international humanitarian and human rights law is at risk as they could be perceived to be aiding the International Criminal Court investigation into the potential war crimes committed in Ukraine;

- E. whereas the Russian legal reforms have introduced administrative and criminal offenses for Russian nationals, or legal entities who call for international sanctions against the Russian state, its nationals or any Russian legal entities;
- F. whereas Novaya Gazeta, a world renowned newspaper suspended its publications due to exhaustive censorship, systemic intimidation and threats to the safety of journalists following their coverage of the war in Ukraine; whereas on 28 February, Rozkomnadzor blocked Nastoyashchee Vremya (Current Times), a subsidiary of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, for spreading “unreliable” information about the invasion;
- G. whereas Novaya Gazeta, a world renowned newspaper suspended its publications due to exhaustive censorship, systemic intimidation and threats to the safety of journalists following their coverage of the war in Ukraine;
- H. whereas Rozkomnadzor banned Russian media outlets from publishing an interview with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy just hours after the interview was taken, which lead to journalists based in Russia to refrain from doing so due to fears of censorship and threats;
- I. whereas the police raided the offices of an opposition newspaper and a local branch of opposition party Yabloko, in Pskov on 5 March 2022, on grounds of proceedings opened in response to allegations that the offices disseminate emails inviting local residents to take part in anti-war protests;
- J. whereas in the context of the changes targeting the media, several foreign media agencies have closed their offices in Russia, while Russian independent media began deleting their previous war-related content; whereas at least 150 journalists have left Russia since the beginning of the war in Ukraine;
- K. whereas a number of Russian opposition members, including Alexey Navalny, have spoken in favour of sanctions against Russia, as well as against persons with close ties to the Kremlin and thus risk being held liable under the new set of offences;
- L. whereas since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, soldiers fulfilling their mandatory military service have been forced to sign contracts, or were sent to the border with Ukraine (according to the Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers which since the middle of February started receiving calls from parents who were not aware of their children’s whereabouts);
- M. whereas Russian opposition political leader Alexey Navalny was serving a two-and-a-half-year unjust sentence at a prison camp, east of Moscow where he is held on various fabricated charges;
- N. whereas on March 15, Alexey Navalny was sentenced to nine years in a penal colony - a maximum security prison, and fined 1.2 million roubles (about 12.838 euros);
- O. Continues to condemn in the strongest possible terms the Russia’s illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as Belarus’ part in it, and calls for bringing those responsible to justice;

1. Strongly condemns the measures adopted by the Russian authorities against free media, free speech and independent reporting, including the closure of media outlets, the blocking of websites, the criminalization of independent media reporting and the targeting of peaceful protesters;
2. Expresses its deepest condolences to the families and colleagues of killed journalists while reporting on the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine;
3. Expresses its solidarity with media outlets, independent journalists and civil society actors in Russia, including tens of thousands of Russian people who joined anti-war demonstrations and protests; reiterates its concern about the climate of insecurity and hostility faced by human rights defenders and journalists and stands in solidarity with them, as they are often the ones who provide key and timely information;
4. Demands to the Russian authorities to repel the legislative amendments aimed at repressing critical voices and independent media actors, and at the criminal prosecution leading to the imprisonment of professional journalists, of anyone publishing war-related information online or potentially anyone discussing the war in public;
5. Condemns Russian authorities' behaviour in persecuting mothers of Russian soldiers and their established organisations, depriving Russian parents of information about whereabouts of their children and refusing to cooperate with Ukrainian authorities in order to return the remains of Russian soldiers killed in action to Russia;
6. Praises the courage of the 300 priests of the Russian Orthodox Church who have signed a letter condemning the aggression, grieving over the ordeal of the Ukrainian people and asking to "stop the war";
7. Condemns the role of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, for providing theological cover for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
8. Continues to condemn Russia's involvement in the scheme by the Lukashenka regime to instrumentalise migrants for political purposes and to destabilize the neighbouring EU Members States and all the Union;
9. Urges the Kremlin to abolish the repressive legislation that has circumvented the activities of civil society organizations, including the 2012 Foreign Agent Law and the Undesirable Organizations Law from 2015 that are aimed at excluding media outlets, individual activists and international non-governmental organizations from the country on grounds of illegality;
10. Underlines that acts of the Russian Federation in silencing independent journalists, media actors and opposition parties, and deterring opposition voices are inadequate for a member state of the OSCE, due to its commitment to safeguard fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rule of law; and calls on the Council of Europe and the OSCE to establish an appropriate investigation into the breaches committed by the Russian Federation following Moscow's military intervention in Ukraine;
11. Deeply regrets the vanishing of the two most important free voices in Russia, the Echo of Moscow, closed by the authorities and of Novaya Gazeta exhausted by censorship and political harassment; calls for the end of a systematic repression of journalistic institutions and independent media who constitute the fundamental pillars of freedom and democracy;
12. Calls on all governments to refuse any future extradition request for Russian nationals for offenses under the Criminal Code and the Code of Administrative Offences;

13. Calls on the European Union and its Member States to offer support and protection to independent media professionals, human rights defenders, civil society activists, social activists and political activists facing the ongoing repression in Russia; including by providing emergency visas for Russian journalists and their families and by offering financial support to help Russian media outlets relocate to safety; Calls on the European Union and its member states to support and protect the Russian diaspora in the European Union, which are vocal in their criticism of the Russian government and are facing threats originating from Russian authorities; calls on the EU and its member states to find ways of supporting new technological solutions for Russian citizens to have access to independent sources of information; points out that it would be useful, in this regard, to set up platforms that would provide independent content in both English and Russian, and that would allow the EU to engage with Russian citizens beyond the information filtered by the Russian state apparatus;
14. Calls on the state, as a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, to uphold its obligations to respect and protect the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, which include the rights “to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”;
15. Urges the Kremlin to immediately put an end to the control and censorship imposed due to the Russian military interventions, as they constitute breaches of fundamental freedoms considering that Russian censorship does not meet the criteria for lawful interference with these rights since it does not satisfy the necessary and proportionate grounds of legitimacy, including national security, territorial integrity, or public safety;
16. Condemns in the highest possible terms the unjust sentence and imprisonment of opposition leader, Alexey Navalny, and the instrumentalization of the justice system for politically motivated repression against him, as a strong opposition figure and a leader of human rights across the Russian Federation;
17. Regrets that the Lefortovo District Court hearing of the Navalny case was conducted in a closed setting, without access to observers, which thus illustrates that the case of the opposition figure and laureate of the prestigious Sakharov Prize for Freedom is an integral part of the systemic crackdown on civil society, individual investigators and human rights defenders in Russia;
18. 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, the President, Government and the State Duma of the Russian Federation, the President, Government and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.