

# Freedom of the media in the Russian Federation: UK-Canada statement

Mr Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of both the UK and Canada.

The actions taken by the Russian authorities in recent months are a further demonstration of the erosion of independent media and critical voices in Russia. We remain concerned by the brief detention and interrogation of the journalist Roman Anin, who has led numerous investigations into organized crime and corruption in Russia. Mr Anin's apartment and offices were raided by the FSB, allegedly in retaliation for his investigations into the Kremlin elite. This is yet another example of Russia's constriction of independent media.

Furthermore, the Chechen authorities' continued intimidation and verbal attacks against the journalist Elena Milashina and the newspaper Novaya Gazeta are unacceptable. We previously raised the attack on Ms Milashina last February in this forum. We are dismayed that these attacks have continued.

Ms Milashina's article on extrajudicial killings, featuring the testimony of a former Chechen patrol officer, is the latest of credible reports detailing the continuing violations of human rights in Chechnya. We recall the [2018 Moscow Mechanism report](#), which confirmed concerns over very serious human rights violations in the Chechen Republic, and addressed the lack of effective remedies and the problem of impunity.

We note that in Milan in 2018, OSCE participating States agreed to "take effective measures to end impunity for crimes committed against journalists... including by ensuring that law enforcement agencies carry out swift, effective and impartial investigations into acts of violence and threats against journalists".

In addition, we are concerned by the detention of Russian citizens exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, which are enshrined in the Russian constitution. Again the Russian government fails to respect and comply with its international commitments on human rights in the OSCE and the Council of Europe. Russia should release citizens detained during peaceful demonstrations. We are also concerned that Russia continues to target independent media outlets and journalists who are covering these protests.

We urge the authorities in the Russian Federation to demonstrate their commitment to the OSCE human rights principles that they freely signed up to, including the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. Russia must investigate all human rights violations committed against journalists and independent media outlets, and bring those responsible to justice.