

Memorial human rights group: statement from UK and partners

Government response

The UK, US, Australia, Canada and EU have today issued the following statement on the court decision to liquidate Russian human rights group Memorial



The following joint statement was today (December 31, 2021) issued by the United States of America, Australia, Canada, the European Union, and the United Kingdom.

“We deplore the decisions by two Russian courts to forcibly close International Memorial and the Memorial Human Rights Center. For more than three decades, Memorial has fulfilled a unique role in documenting historical crimes and recovering for posterity the memory of the tens of millions of victims of political repression in the country.

“Memorial has also advocated tirelessly for the protection of human rights in Russia, exposing appalling abuses, including in the North Caucasus, and maintaining a growing list of individuals it considers to be political prisoners. The claim by Russian authorities that Memorial Human Rights Center’s principled and peaceful work ‘justifies extremism and terrorism’ cannot be accepted. Memorial’s work has never been more needed.

“The unconscionable decision to silence Memorial follows many months of deepening and systematic repression in Russia against human rights defenders, independent media and journalists, political opposition members and critical voices, as well as religious minority groups and other marginalised groups. This further harms Russia’s international reputation, as respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law constitutes one of the foundations of the rules-based international order.

“We call on Russia to uphold its international human rights obligations and commitments and we continue to condemn the Russian legislation on ‘foreign agents’, which further silences independent voices and shrinks the space for

civil society. The people of Russia, like people everywhere, have the right to freedom of expression and association, including in defence of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Published 31 December 2021