<u>Press Releases: Designation Under</u> <u>Russia's "Undesirables" Law of Open</u> <u>Russia, the Open Russia Civic</u> <u>Movement, and the Institute of Modern</u> <u>Russia</u>

Press Statement Mark C. Toner

Deputy Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC April 28, 2017

We are deeply troubled by the Russian Government's decision to designate Open Russia, the Open Russia Civic Movement, and the Institute of Modern Russia as so-called "undesirable" foreign organizations. We reject the notion that these and other international civil society organizations are a threat to Russia. If Russia hopes to build a strong, democratic government with a dynamic, competitive economy, it should value and support, not harass and criminalize such independent voices.

We again call on the Government of Russia to uphold its international obligations and commitments to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and to cease restrictions on the work of civil society organizations in Russia.

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