

# THE OBSERVATORY

## for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

L'OBSERVATOIRE

pour la Protection des Défenseurs des Droits de  
l'Homme

EL OBSERVATORIO

para la Protección  
de los Defensores de Derechos Humanos

### URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

**RUS 004 / 0409 / OBS 057**

Assault

**Russian Federation**

April 1, 2009

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in the **Russian Federation**.

#### **Brief description of the situation:**

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources of the assault against Mr. **Lev Ponomarev**, Executive Director of the All-Russia Public Movement "For Human Rights".

According to the information received, on March 31, 2009, at around 11 pm, unidentified individuals brutally beat up Mr. Lev Ponomarev, in the surroundings of his home. They had reportedly been waiting for him near the entrance of the building. As the concierge appeared, the attackers escaped. Mr. Ponomarev was then brought to the hospital n°36, and then discharged. As of issuing this urgent appeal, he remained under medical observation.

Furthermore, on the eve of the assault, the tyres of his car had been pierced.

Mr. Ponomarev had noted that he had been followed on several occasions throughout 2008. On December 28, 2008 for example, he was tracked on his way back home. He had reported these events to the law enforcement agencies, which have not taken any action so far.

The Observatory believes that this assault might be related to his human rights activities, and urges the Russian authorities to carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into all the above-mentioned facts, in order to identify all those responsible for the assault against Mr. Ponomarev and bring them in the shortest delays before a competent and impartial tribunal.

The Observatory recalls that according to OP 2(iv.) of the Council of Europe (CoE) Declaration on Human Rights Defenders<sup>1</sup>, member-States shall "take effective measures to prevent attacks on or harassment of human rights defenders, ensure independent and effective investigation of such acts and to hold those responsible accountable through administrative measures and/or criminal proceedings". Accordingly, the Observatory calls upon the Commissioner for Human Rights of the CoE to act in accordance with operative paragraph 4 of the CoE Declaration on Human Rights Defenders with regards to this situation.

The Observatory further urges the European Commission Delegation as well as European Union (EU) Member-States embassies in the Russian Federation to call upon the Russian authorities to comply with the relevant international norms and standards and take action in the light of the above-mentioned elements, in line with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

The Observatory recalls that the Russian Federation was elected to the Human Rights Council in June 2006 for three years and is committed, in this regard, to "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights". In addition, as a participating State of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Russian Federation acknowledges that "the [1998] UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders [... places] a

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<sup>1</sup> See Declaration of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for enhanced protection of human rights defenders, adopted on February 6, 2008.

responsibility [...] on states to [...] provide for a conducive environment for human rights defenders to promote and strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”, and recognises “the need for particular attention, support and protection for human rights defenders by the OSCE, its Institutions and field operations, as well as by participating States”<sup>2</sup>.

### **Actions requested:**

The Observatory urges the authorities of the Russian Federation to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Lev Ponomarev, as well as all human rights defenders in the Russian Federation;
- ii. Carry out an immediate, effective, thorough and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned assault against Mr. Lev Ponomarev, the result of which must be made public, in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before a competent, independent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal, civil and/or administrative sanctions provided by the law;
- iii. Put an end to all acts of harassment against Mr. Lev Ponomarev as well as against all human rights defenders in the Russian Federation, and ensure in all circumstances that they be able to carry out their work without unjustified hindrances;
- iii. Comply with all the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, in particular with Article 1, which provides that “everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”, as well as with Article 12.2 (“the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, *de facto* or *de jure* adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”);
- iv. Comply with the provisions of the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference on the Human Dimension of the Cooperation and Security Conference in Europe (CSCE) (1990), and uphold in all circumstances the principles and provisions enshrined in the international and regional human rights instruments ratified by the Russian Federation and which, in particular, guarantee freedoms of association, demonstration, expression and opinion, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- v. More generally, ensure in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international and regional human rights instruments ratified by the Russian Federation.

### **Addresses:**

- Mr. Dmitri Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation, Kremlin, Moscow, Russian Federation, Faxes: + 7 095 206 5173 / 230 2408
- Mr. Yuriy Chaika, General Public Prosecutor of Russian Federation, 125993, Moscow, GSP-3, 15a B. Dimitrovka str. Russian Federation, Fax: +7 495 692-96-00 / +7 495 692 17 25
- Chairwoman of the Presidential Human Rights Commission of the Russian Federation, Ella Pamfilova, 103132 g. Moskva, Staraya ploshchad, d 8/5, pod 3, Russian Federation, Fax: +70952064855
- Vladimir Lukin, Russian Federal Ombudsman for Human Rights, Fax: +7 495 207 3969 / +7 495 207-53-37
- Minister of Internal Affairs, Rashid Nurgaliev, ul. Zhitnaya, 16, 117049 Moscow, Russian Federation, Telegram: Rossiia, 117049, Moskva, Fax: + 7 095 237 49 25
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, Smolenskaya-Sennaya pl, 32/34, 121200 Moscow, Russian Federation, Telegram: Fax: + 7 095 244 2203
- Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations in Geneva Av. de la Paix 15, CH-1211, Geneva 20, Switzerland, e-mail : mission.russian@ties.itu.int, Fax: +4122 734 40 44
- Embassy of the Russian Federation in Brussels, 31-33 boulevard du Régent, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, Fax: + 32 2 513 76 49.

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<sup>2</sup> See OP 6 & OP 8 of the Resolution on Strengthening OSCE Engagement with Human Rights Defenders and National Human Rights Institutions, adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on July 10, 2007.

Please also write to the diplomatic mission or embassy of the Russian Federation in your respective country.

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Geneva-Paris, April 1, 2009

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need. The Observatory was the winner of the 1998 Human Rights Prize of the French Republic.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

E-mail: [Appeals@fidh-omct.org](mailto:Appeals@fidh-omct.org)

Tel and fax OMCT + 41 22 809 49 39 / + 41 22 809 49 29

Tel and fax FIDH + 33 1 43 55 20 11 / +33 1 43 55 18 80

## **FIDH**

International Federation for Human Rights  
17, Passage de la Main d'Or  
75 011 Paris, France

## **OMCT**

World Organisation Against Torture  
Case postale 21 - 8 rue du Vieux-Billard  
1211 Geneva 8, Switzerland