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PRESS RELEASE

International Conference: ‘10 years on - No Justice for Georgiy Gongadze - the Need to Find New Ways to Fight Impunity’

On 16 September 2000, Ukrainian journalist Georgiy Gongadze ‘disappeared’ on his way home from work and was later found dead. To date none of the masterminds behind his ‘disappearance’ and subsequent killing have been brought to justice. To commemorate Georgiy and honour journalists in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, who, like him, were killed because of their work, on 16 September, 2010 ARTICLE 19 and IMS are hosting an international conference in Kyiv to redefine advocacy strategies to combat impunity.

Georgiy Gongadze, the co-founder of the news website *Ukrainska Pravda*, disappeared on 16 September 2000. He had been frequently harassed and intimidated by authorities, including the Ukrainian Secret Service, because of his criticism directed at the government. His decapitated body was found one and a half months later on 3 November 2000, doused in dioxin and petrol. The criminal investigation into his case has been marred by frequent delays and obstruction by government officials and the death of key witnesses in the case. Three of the alleged assassins were convicted in 2005 but none of the masterminds of the crime have been brought to justice.

Meanwhile, journalists in Belarus and Russia also continue to be killed with impunity. Even in highly publicised cases, such as the killing of Anna Politkovskaya in Russia in 2006 and the ‘disappearance’ of Dmitriy Zavadsky in 2000 in Belarus, none of the instigators of these crimes have been found and brought to justice.

On 16 September, the conference ‘*10 years on – no justice for Georgiy Gongadze – the need to find new ways to fight impunity*’, brings together for the first time public officials, the OSCE Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, media professionals and representatives of NGOs from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine to discuss possible solutions. It will address the protection of journalists, including the use of violence as a means of controlling the media, the lack of effective government interventions to prevent and investigate abuses, and the resultant chilling effect on the media environment with the aim to redefine advocacy strategies to combat impunity in a constructive way.

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- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.
- International Media Support (IMS) is a non-profit organisation working with media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition. In more than 30 countries worldwide, IMS helps to strengthen professional practices and ensure that media and media workers can operate under challenging circumstances
- The Conference is organised as part the IMS Media and Democracy Programme for Central and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus