

111TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. RES. 1539

Expressing solidarity with human rights defenders in the Russian Federation,  
and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 20, 2010

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida submitted the following resolution; which was  
referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing solidarity with human rights defenders in the  
Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

Whereas the Russian Federation is a permanent member of  
the United Nations Security Council, a participating  
state of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in  
Europe (OSCE), a member state of the Council of Eu-  
rope, and as a signatory to international legislation has  
freely committed to uphold and respect international law;

Whereas the Russian Federation, as a party to the United  
Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights under  
article 3 is obligated to ensure “the right to life, liberty,  
and security of person”;

Whereas the Russian Federation, as a signatory to the Inter-  
national Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and as a  
party to the European Convention on Human Rights, is

legally obliged to uphold fundamental freedoms and human rights, including the right to life, freedom of expression, and freedom of association, among others;

Whereas all OSCE participating states, including the Russian Federation, have recognized the right of individuals to know and act upon human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to contribute actively, individually or in association with others, to their promotion and protection;

Whereas human rights defenders, investigative journalists, and activists addressing human rights abuses and corruption in the Russian Federation are routinely targeted for harassment, persecution, and physical attacks;

Whereas human rights defenders, investigative journalists, and activists in the North Caucasus and those reporting on developments in that region of the Russian Federation have been systematically targeted for reprisals because of their work;

Whereas Natalya Estemirova, the leading human rights defender in Chechnya, was abducted nearby her apartment building in Grozny on July 15, 2009, by unidentified men, transported to the neighboring Republic of Ingushetia, and brutally killed;

Whereas several other activists were also slain in 2009 in connection with their professional work in the North Caucasus and others remain at risk;

Whereas Anna Politkovskaya and over a dozen other journalists have been killed in Russia since 2000 in retaliation for their work, in cases that remain unsolved;

Whereas the 2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, issued by the Department of State, found that the Russian Government's poor human rights record in the

North Caucasus worsened, with a marked increase in extrajudicial killings by both Government and rebel forces and politically motivated disappearances in Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan; and

Whereas the ongoing human rights violations, legal impunity, and the permeating climate of fear in the North Caucasus remain a concern of human rights defenders and the international community: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) expresses solidarity with human rights de-  
3       fenders in the Russian Federation;

4               (2) calls for an end to the harassment, persecu-  
5       tion, and attacks against human rights activists, in-  
6       cluding journalists, in the Russian Federation;

7               (3) condemns the impunity for those responsible  
8       for murder of human rights defenders, including  
9       journalists, in the Russian Federation;

10              (4) urges the Russian Federation to—

11                   (A) fully respect in practice the rights and  
12                   freedoms of all human rights defenders, includ-  
13                   ing the right to life, freedom of expression, and  
14                   freedom of association;

15                   (B) take appropriate measures to end the  
16                   harassment, persecution, and attacks against  
17                   human rights activists, including lawyers and  
18                   journalists;

1 (C) ensure that law enforcement officials  
2 vigorously and transparently investigate acts of  
3 violence, harassment, and intimidation against  
4 members of Russian civil society, as well as  
5 make certain that authorities are not complicit  
6 in such acts; and

7 (D) fully and thoroughly investigate all un-  
8 resolved murder cases of human rights defend-  
9 ers, including journalists;

10 (5) urges the President and the Secretary of  
11 State to integrate human rights in all components of  
12 bilateral relations with the Russian Federation and  
13 to continue to raise concerns with the Government  
14 of the Russian Federation over human rights viola-  
15 tions, including the harassment, persecution, and at-  
16 tacks on human rights defenders and journalists;  
17 and

18 (6) urges the Secretary of State to make effec-  
19 tive use of meetings of the Organization for Security  
20 and Cooperation in Europe and other international  
21 fora for the purposes of raising these and other  
22 human rights abuses in the North Caucasus and  
23 elsewhere in the Russian Federation.

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