



Universal Periodic Review of Russia

44th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

Submitting organisation

- Environmental crisis group (ECG)

<https://help-eco.info/>

Contact person on behalf of the organisation:

Liubov Samylova

liubasamylova@gmail.com

Background of submitting organisation

This report is a contribution to the 44th session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Russia, prepared by the Environmental crisis group, a joint initiative of the Russian Socio-Ecological Union Environmental Human Rights defenders program and All-Russian civil environmental movement "We live here!" The submitting initiative, Environmental crisis group, has been monitoring conditions for and pressure towards environmental NGOs and environmental human rights defenders. For the last three years we have been publishing monthly reports of EHRD cases in Russia and following their developments.

The focus of this submission is on uninvestigated attacks on environmental human rights defenders. Especially since Russia's last Universal Periodic Review, and in light of the previous recommendations that was supported by Russia during its third review.

Attacks on environmental human rights defenders

1. In the second cycle, at the session of May 16, 2013, Russia supported a recommendation from Norway, which reads as follows: Investigate promptly, effectively and impartially all reports of attacks on or threats against human rights

defenders, lawyers, journalists and civil society activists, and identify those responsible and bring them to justice.

2. Also recommendation in the third cycle from Romania to “Ensure effective and impartial investigations by the law enforcement authorities aimed at preventing and combating offenses against journalists and human rights defenders, with a view to holding the perpetrators accountable” was supported.
3. Despite that obligation, an earlier attack in 2008 to an environmental journalist and defender of Khimki forest Michail Beketov from Moscow, who died in 2013 from related to the attack causes, still wasn't properly investigated and the perpetrators were not found and punished. This year, 2023, the statute of limitations for a criminal investigation expires.
4. Another infamous brutal attack in December 2018 on the head of Environmental Watch of the North Caucasus (EWNC) and other activists in Krasnodar after filming the illegal construction of a mansion on the Black Sea coast still wasn't properly investigated and the perpetrators were not found and punished.
5. According to our monitoring data, during the last three years at least 52 environmental defenders were attacked and injured of varying degrees of severity (at least [15](#) EHRDs in 2020, at least [18](#) in 2021, at least [19](#) in 2022).
6. For example, on July 12, 2022 in the city of Kotelnikovo, Volgograd region, while documenting (video recording) fire at an illegal landfill, ecoactivist Igor Nedodaev was hit by the landfill guards. They attacked the man with threats, demanding that he stop filming, and then they hit him in the head. He fell, and blood gushed from his left ear. The next day Nedodaev was hospitalized, where he was diagnosed with the brain concussion.
7. On the evening of July 12, Nedodaev reported to the police about beatings by employees of the landfill. Also, his wife Maria wrote a request to the prosecutor's office to deal with the illegal dump near the Aksai River, attaching a video of fire in confirmation.
8. On February 16, 2023 journalists sent a request to the head of the Department of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation for the Kotelnikovo district of Volgograd region for information about whether an investigation was conducted and a criminal case on intentional injury to the health of Igor Nedodaev was opened, and if so, at what procedural stage it is at.
9. This appeal was registered only on February 27, 2023, in violation of the three-day deadline. Moreover, the answer to the request from journalists should have been received within seven days after the registration of the appeal. As of April 5, 2023, the journalists cooperating with us have not received a response.

10. We know about other cases when officials violate the terms allowed for a response.
11. On top of the violations of the terms of responses, authorities may technically give an answer, but not provide the information or not respond to the merits of the request.
12. On July 27, 2022, ten people attacked environmental defender Dmitry Privalov at the exit from Bitsevsky Forest in Moscow, severely beating him up and seizing his phone. According to Privalov, he suffered a closed craniocerebral injury, brain concussion, cervical spine distortion, and contusion of soft tissues of the head. Privalov filed a police report.
13. On February 16, 2023 with the help of journalists, a request was sent to the head of the Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia for the Yasenevo district of Moscow Lavrenov S.A. with the following questions:
Has a criminal case been opened regarding the assault, theft of property and damage to health of Dmitriy Privalov? If a criminal case was opened, at what procedural stage is it now? What persons are subject to criminal proceedings? Have the procedural deadlines regarding the movement of the criminal case been met?
14. On March 9, 2023 we received a response, while they should've responded within a seven-day period, with a refusal to provide requested information, referring to the right for privacy, when we were requesting only open and important for the public information.

Recommendations

- 15. Stop all types of pressure on environmental human rights defenders from the state actors and prevent such from the non-state actors;**
- 16. Investigate all cases of attacks and threats to environmental human rights defenders and bring the perpetrators to justice;**
- 17. Investigate all environmental violations, which are associated with attacks on environmental human rights defenders;**
- 18. Ensure safe and free work of environmental human rights defenders, including allowing and promoting freedom to seek, receive, and impart information on environmental issues.**