



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on convictions in the murder of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya

As delivered by Public Affairs Counselor Christopher Midura
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 12, 2014

The United States welcomes the convictions on June 9 in Moscow's highest criminal court of five individuals in connection with the 2006 contract murder of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, and notes the court's finding that she was targeted and killed for her critical reporting. She wrote extensively on Russian government policies with regard to the republic of Chechnya.

We fully concur with this week's statement by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović that "the Politkovskaya case is still not closed until those who ordered this horrific murder are identified and convicted." The lengthy investigation has been clouded by politicization, by President Putin -- who publicly downplayed the significance of Politkovskaya's reporting following her death -- and by others. We are encouraged by recently reported comments of the spokesperson for Russia's Investigative Committee that "exhaustive measures are currently being taken" to find those who ordered her killing and we hope that justice will soon be done in this case.

The United States echoes the sentiments of Representative Mijatović that "Impunity for crimes against journalists is still commonplace in several countries within the OSCE area; this case serves as a horrid reminder of this."

This year marks some grim anniversaries for the practice of journalism in the Russian Federation: the fifth anniversary of the murder of human rights defender and Novaya Gazeta contributor Natalya Estemirova; the tenth anniversary of the killing of Forbes journalist and editor Paul Klebnikov; and the fifteenth anniversary of the death of Dmitriy Kholodov, who had been writing about high-level corruption in the Russian military for the independent newspaper Moskovskiy Komsomolets.

We remind all participating States that it has been two decades since the OSCE approved a decision aimed at strengthening protections for the safety of journalists. We strongly encourage all participating States to support a decision in Basel to protect journalists in their work and combat impunity for attacks against journalists and media outlets.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.