

45th SESSION

Resolution
CG(2023)45-19-AMDT
20 October 2023

AMENDMENTS**The plight of anti-war political activists and prisoners of conscience in Russia**

Rapporteur¹: Leendert VERBEEK, Netherlands (R, SOC/G/PD)

DRAFT RESOLUTION (for vote) AMDTs 1 – 11 and SUB-AMDT 1

1. Since Russia's large-scale military invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, which Russians are legally obliged to call a "Special Military Operation", the prevailing systematic repression of opposition voices and of civil society has significantly escalated.

2. Legislation was passed in March 2022 criminalising the so-called "discrediting" and dissemination of "knowingly false information" about the Russian armed forces. Alexei Gorinov, municipal councillor of the Krasnoselsky District, Moscow, who had spoken against the war during a council session, was the first to be sentenced to seven years' imprisonment under this new legislation. Ilya Yashin, another municipal councillor from the same council as Alexei Gorinov, was also sentenced for "disseminating false information" to eight and a half years in prison.

Councillors from other regions faced the same charges, including Oleg Nepein from Saratov region, who is currently in pre-trial detention, and Anatoly Arseev from Arkhangelsk regions who is currently under criminal prosecution. Many others have been persecuted or have left the country fearing imprisonment.

3. Further legislation has been enacted to restrict demonstrations and the activities of NGOs and civil society activists. Voicing criticism of the war and speaking out against human rights violations became "crimes" for which activists such as Vladimir Kara-Murza, sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment in April 2023, and numerous other human rights defenders, journalists, youth activists and political opponents may now be arrested, prosecuted and convicted.

4. Other critics of the war, while not arrested, have been branded as traitors, spies or foreign agents, with these labels leading in many cases to loss of employment and restrictions placed on their personal lives and those of their families.

¹ L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions
EPP/CCE: European People's Party Group in the Congress
SOC: Socialist Group
ILDG: Independent Liberal and Democratic Group
ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group
NR: Members not belonging to a political group of the Congress

Amendment 1

Presented by Liliia Pashynna, Ukraine, L, ILDG.

Signed by: Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK-KRYVKO, Ukraine, R, ECR; Oksana DERKACH, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tetiana HOIAN, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tatia NIKOLASHVILI, Georgia, L, EPP/CCE.

Insert a new paragraph after paragraph 4 and renumber the following paragraphs accordingly:

Ukrainians on the territories occupied by the Russian Federation, including Crimean Tatars, the indigenous people of Ukraine, have also greatly suffered from the escalating repressions. In May 2023, the Russian court has sentenced blind Crimean activist Oleksandr Sizikov to 17 years in prison. On 10 February 2023, Crimean Tatar Dzhemil Gafarov died in a Russian prison after almost four years of illegal detention in appalling conditions on fabricated charges.

5. It is almost impossible to know the true level of domestic support for or opposition to the war, given the prevailing suffocating and toxic atmosphere.

Amendment 2

Presented by Liliia Pashynna, Ukraine, L, ILDG.

Signed by: Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK-KRYVKO, Ukraine, R, ECR; Oksana DERKACH, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tetiana HOIAN, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tatia NIKOLASHVILI, Georgia, L, EPP/CCE.

Delete paragraph 5 and replace it with the following paragraph:

With these coercive measures, the Russian regime has to a large extent managed to suppress internal opposition to its aggression against Ukraine. The freedom of speech and assembly is significantly limited, complicating expressions of opposition to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

6. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities:

- a. deplores and most emphatically condemns the escalating repression, by Russian authorities, of all those who express dissent and criticism;

Amendment 3

Presented by Liliia Pashynna, Ukraine, L, ILDG.

Signed by: Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK-KRYVKO, Ukraine, R, ECR; Oksana DERKACH, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tetiana HOIAN, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tatia NIKOLASHVILI, Georgia, L, EPP/CCE.

In paragraph 6.a, after the word "authorities", insert the following words: ", due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine,".

The paragraph would read:

- a. deplores and most emphatically condemns the escalating repression, by Russian authorities, due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, of all those who express dissent and criticism;

- b. stands in solidarity with all those who are unjustly imprisoned for expressing their opinions, with their families and all those who are currently silenced in Russia;

Amendment 4

Presented by Liliia Pashynna, Ukraine, L, ILDG.

Signed by: Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK-KRYVKO, Ukraine, R, ECR; Oksana DERKACH, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tetiana HOIAN, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tatia NIKOLASHVILI, Georgia, L, EPP/CCE.

In paragraph 6.b, after the word “Russia”, insert the following words: “, on the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, and elsewhere, including the Ukrainian citizen and former President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, opposed to Putin’s aggression in Georgia;”.

The paragraph would read:

b. stands in solidarity with all those who are unjustly imprisoned for expressing their opinions, with their families and all those who are currently silenced in Russia, on the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, and elsewhere, including the Ukrainian citizen and former President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, opposed to Putin’s aggression in Georgia;

Amendment 10

Presented by the rapporteur, Leendert Verbeek, Netherlands (R, SOC/G/PD)

In paragraph 6.b, after the word “Russia”, insert the following words: “and in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine”.

The paragraph would read:

b. stands in solidarity with all those who are unjustly imprisoned for expressing their opinions, with their families and all those who are currently silenced in Russia and in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine;

c. calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all peaceful civic and political activists deprived of liberty in Russia;

Amendment 5

Presented by Liliia Pashynna, Ukraine, L, ILDG.

Signed by: Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK-KRYVKO, Ukraine, R, ECR; Oksana DERKACH, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tetiana HOIAN, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tatia NIKOLASHVILI, Georgia, L, EPP/CCE.

Replace paragraph 6.c by the following paragraph:

c. calls on the Russian authorities for the immediate and unconditional release of all peaceful civic and political activists and political opponents deprived of liberty in Russia and on the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Furthermore, calls on the Georgian authorities for immediate and unconditional release of Putin’s prisoner, Ukrainian citizen and former President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili;

Sub-amendment 1

Presented by the rapporteur, Leendert Verbeek, Netherlands (R, SOC/G/PD)

In amendment 5, delete the last sentence.

The amendment as sub-amended would read:

Replace paragraph 6.c by the following paragraph:

c. calls on the Russian authorities for the immediate and unconditional release of all peaceful civic and political activists and political opponents deprived of liberty in Russia and in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine;

d. calls for the repeal of all legislation incompatible with the right to freedom of expression;

Amendment 6

Presented by Liliia Pashynna, Ukraine, L, ILDG.

Signed by: Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK-KRYVKO, Ukraine, R, ECR; Oksana DERKACH, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tetiana HOIAN, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tatia NIKOLASHVILI, Georgia, L, EPP/CCE.

In paragraph 6.d, after the word “calls”, insert the words: “on the Russian authorities”.

The paragraph would read:

“calls on the Russian authorities for the repeal of all legislation incompatible with the right to freedom of expression;”

e. calls on European cities and regions, and in particular “refugee cities” to extend their protection also to pro-democracy activists fleeing Russia;

Amendment 7

Presented by Liliia Pashynna, Ukraine, L, ILDG.

Signed by: Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK-KRYVKO, Ukraine, R, ECR; Oksana DERKACH, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tetiana HOIAN, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tatia NIKOLASHVILI, Georgia, L, EPP/CCE.

In paragraph 6.e, after the word “activists”, insert the words: “respecting the values of the Council of Europe and territorial integrity of its member states”.

The paragraph would read:

e. calls on European cities and regions, and in particular “refugee cities” to extend their protection also to pro-democracy activists respecting the values of the Council of Europe and territorial integrity of its member states;

Amendment 8

Presented by Liliia Pashynna, Ukraine, L, ILDG.

Signed by: Svitlana BOHATYRCHUK-KRYVKO, Ukraine, R, ECR; Oksana DERKACH, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tetiana HOIAN, Ukraine, L, EPP/CCE; Tatia NIKOLASHVILI, Georgia, L, EPP/CCE.

After paragraph 6.e, insert a new paragraph and renumber the following paragraphs accordingly:

The new paragraph would read:

calls for active involvement of the international community in pressuring the Russian authorities to release political prisoners and stop its war of aggression against Ukraine, fully restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders;

Amendment 9

Presented by Günther BERGMANN, Germany, R, PPE/CCE.

Signed by: Heiner KLEMP, Germany, R, SOC/G/PD; Harald SONDEREGGER, Austria, R, EPP/CCE; Sonja LEDL-ROSSMANN, Austria, R, EPP/CCE; Reinhart ROHR, Austria, R, SOC/G/PD.

After paragraph 6.e, insert a new paragraph and renumber the following paragraphs accordingly:

The new paragraph would read:

invites European cities and regions to promote political sponsorship programmes for threatened and detained human rights defenders, thereby drawing attention and paying tribute to the commitment of human rights defenders in Russia and abroad;

f. expresses its hope that democracy can prevail in Russia, thereby bringing peace in Ukraine and safeguarding stability in Europe;

g. instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Russian authorities.

Amendment 11

Presented by the rapporteur, Leendert Verbeek, Netherlands (R, SOC/G/PD)

In the title of the draft resolution, after the word "Russia", insert the following words: "and in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine".

The title would read:

The plight of anti-war political activists and prisoners of conscience in Russia and in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine