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Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Information on the steps taken by the government to combat racism, particularly against Africans

A news story released in March 2010 by *BBC News* points out:

“Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin recently called for tougher laws against racially motivated attacks” (BBC News (11 March 2010) *Russian court jails nine over racist killing*).

A report issued in April 2011 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of 2010 states:

“Persons of color complained of unequal treatment at the hands of authorities” (United States Department of State (8 April 2011) *2010 Human Rights Report: Russia*, Section 6 Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons/National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities).

In August 2011 *Minority Rights Group International* notes:

“The Russian authorities have also been accused of targeting visible minorities for racial profiling, resulting in unnecessary registration and passport checks, searches and even arbitrary arrests. Few discrimination cases are prosecuted in Russia because there is no comprehensive network of anti-discrimination laws, and lawyers and judges are not trained in litigating human rights issues within Russia” (Minority Rights Group International (August 2011) *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Russian Federation : Overview*).

The report commenting on racist attacks states:

“Human rights organizations believe that local authorities' silent endorsement of violent racism has fostered a climate of impunity for those perpetrating such attacks” (ibid).

A report issued in August 2010 by the *United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* points out:

“The Committee notes with concern that the State party has not adopted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation aimed at protecting ethnic minorities, in particular Chechens, Roma and persons of African origin” (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (16 August 2010) *Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women – Russian Federation*, p.12).

BBC News in July 2011 notes:

"Russia has seen a surge of racially motivated attacks in recent years in Moscow and other large cities. The authorities have responded by banning groups like the Nationalist Socialist Society, but rights group have accused officials of being too lenient on racist crimes" (BBC News (12 July 2011) *Russia neo-Nazis jailed for life over 27 race murders*).

In July 2011 *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* states:

"Anti-racism campaigners have welcomed the tough sentences handed down by a Moscow court against a group of serial killers as part of a recent government crackdown on ultranationalist groups that follows years of leniency" (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (12 July 2011) *Russian Neo-Nazi Murderers' Tough Sentences Welcomed*).

This document also notes:

"Alla Gerber, the head of the Moscow-based Holocaust Foundation, welcomes the verdicts and tells RFE/RL that "until very recently, there was a complete silence". "For years, law-enforcement agencies ignored all our calls, complaints, and appeals," Gerber says. "Even when murders were clearly committed on racial grounds, the perpetrators were charged with hooliganism or crimes of daily life that resulted in suspended sentences." The gang members were convicted of killing migrants from Russia's Caucasus region and from Central Asia, as well as Africans and South East Asians, in vicious attacks coordinated by the gang's leader, Lev Molotkov" (ibid).

It is also stated in this report that:

"The increase in the number of jail sentences against racial offenders in recent years has led to a sharp drop in racially motivated murders. But rights groups, while praising the government's efforts to curb racist violence, say years of impunity have allowed ultranationalist groups to grow into a well-organized and resilient force" (ibid).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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