

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	301
Land:	Ukraine
Kilde:	UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Titel:	Human Rights and Democracy Report 2016 – Russia
Udgivet:	20. juli 2017
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	28. august 2017



Human Rights and Democracy Report 2016 - CHAPTER VI: Human Rights Priority Countries - Russia

The human rights environment in Russia deteriorated further in 2016.

The UK was deeply concerned about the ongoing crackdown on civil society and freedom of expression. The government increasingly used legislation to restrict civil society organisations, including broadening the definition of “political activity” under the “Foreign Agents” law. The introduction of the “Yarovaya Law” in July, aimed at tackling religious extremism, resulted in increased restrictions of online freedoms and a clampdown on religious activity. State media television continue to promote a narrow, pro-government, narrative.

State Duma Elections in September, whilst transparently administered, featured numerous procedural irregularities. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) monitoring mission noted it was negatively affected by restrictions to fundamental freedoms and political rights. Modern slavery remained a serious problem in Russia with an estimated one million people in Russia living in slavery (according to the Global Slavery Index). Although the government took legislative measures to deal with this, they fell far short of what would be needed to tackle the problem. LGB&T persons continued to be at significant risk of persecution and violence, with the Russian Government taking little action to combat homophobia among the Russian population.

The UK’s human rights work in Russia focused on five priority themes: civil society and democracy; equality and non-discrimination; rule of law; the North Caucasus; and freedom of expression. We sponsored a range of projects, including a visit by Sir Ian McKellen that raised the profile of LGB&T rights. We continued to raise our concerns publicly, through multilateral organisations, and directly to the Russian authorities.

Shakespeare Lives on Film Ambassador Sir Ian McKellen holds a copy of the Russian constitution during a visit to Ekaterinburg with the British Council where he spoke to the local LGB&T community.

Severe human rights abuses by the de facto Russian authorities in Crimea continued. Ukrainians opposed to the Russian annexation have been sentenced, arrested or investigated under fabricated charges of extremism; others face pressure to renounce their Ukrainian citizenship in favour of Russian citizenship or be denied access to basic services. Some have been forced into exile. In some cases Ukrainian citizens have been transferred outside Crimea to prisons in Russia.

Ethnic minority Crimean Tatars continued to suffer particular human rights abuses. A number of Crimean Tatars have been imprisoned, and homes and mosques were regularly raided. The UK has frequently raised human rights abuses in Crimea with the de facto Russian authorities. In December, the UK supported a successful UN General Assembly resolution which called for Russia to uphold its obligations in Crimea under applicable international law, and to allow access for international human rights monitors.

In eastern Ukraine, the Russian-backed conflict continued to devastate communities. At the end of 2016, the UN estimated the conflict had cost 10,000 lives and internally displaced almost 1 million people. Russia continued to violate its commitments under the 2015 Minsk Agreement by supplying personnel and weapons to separatist forces. The UK has called for investigations into reports that Ukrainians opposed to the regimes in separatist-controlled territories risk arrest, physical and sexual violence and summary execution.

Russian actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia led to deterioration in the human rights situation in both regions. There was increased pressure on freedom of movement, including through denial of access to documentation, closure of crossing points and installation of razor wire fences along the Administrative Boundary Lines. Georgian language education has been severely curtailed and laws have been passed restricting the residency and property rights of ethnic Georgians. The UK continued to call on Russia and the de facto authorities in both regions to allow international human rights organisations access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. FCO Minister Sir Alan Duncan reiterated the importance of this during a visit to Georgia in November.

Despite a considerable lack of progress, the UK will continue to support human rights in Russia in 2017. We will attend trials and speak out on human rights violations, whilst working with EU partners and through multilateral organisations to hold Russia to account. Russia will also be a priority country for our global efforts to combat modern slavery.