

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of all members of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society and numerous people who support us in different regions of Russia I cordially thank you for accepting our organization to participating in the Human Dimension Implementation meeting this year. By this act of solidarity you are definitely providing Russian civil society with extremely important support in these hard times. I would like to draw your attention that the Russian authorities don't hesitate to manipulate with their terrorists treats and the anti terror legislation in a way that it becomes just a tool to persecute and harass civil society activists by labeling them as extremists.

To my regret, all our attempts to establish a constructive dialogue with Russian authorities have failed and they continue the deformation campaign against those independent activists of the civil society and journalists who they regard as disloyal to them. I have to claim that the Russian federation has deliberately tried to mislead the ODCE and consequently violated the principle of consciousness that is among the main ones in the international law. The RCFS was closed down with the ruling of the Russian Supreme Court under the charges of extremism which is a fact that we are appealing at the European Court of Human Rights. However, the RCFS has never been charged with supporting terrorist activities. We, members of RCFS, appreciate an open support that a group of victims of terrorist attacks came up with at OSCE high level meeting on victim of terror in Vienna. We can't but express our compassion with the people who have lost their nearest and dearest and who have been targeted again by the authorities when they called them the enemies of Russia. For their attempt to expose the results of independent investigation into the acts of terror.

Silencing desperate situation of victims of wars in Chechnya as acts of terror complete irresponsibility in regard to the political crisis in the North Caucasus and it's further spreading are the main features of the internal Russian policy.

We have provided the OSCE with all information concerning our activities aimed at promotion of peace and justice. I have to point out that Anna Politkovskaya has come to our support even after her murder as one of the papers was their typescript of her testimony in court in defense of the leader of the organization Stanislav Dmitrievsky. We felt it our moral obligation to commemorate her with organizing an international event in Nizhniy Novgorod. These plans have been destroyed today as the legitimate activities of Nizhniy Novgorod Foundation in support of tolerance – an inheritor of the RCFS – have been blocked by ruling of the Department of Financial Monitory that used to be headed by the present prime-minister Victor Zubkov.

Once again, their coming with accusations of extremism and terrorism in order to silence all independent voices inside Russia and to present us as marginalized groups to the international community. The Russian authorities are forcing us out of the transparent, legitimate field of activities and we do feel concerned for our freedom and integrity.

We call on the member states of the OSCE to monitor the situation in Nizhniy Novgorod and numerous cases of harassment of independent human rights activists and journalists as they are evidently trying to send a tough threatening message to the whole civil society in Russia in order to suppress it.