

PEC press release

PEC welcomes the nomination by the Human Rights Council of a special rapporteur on Russia

Geneva, 7 October (PEC) Press Emblem Campaign (PEC) welcomes the nomination by the Human Rights Council of a Special rapporteur on Russia. The resolution presented by the European Union has been adopted today in Geneva by 17 votes in favour, 6 against (Russia, China, Cuba, Eritrea, Kazakhstan, Venezuela) and 24 abstentions at the end of the 51st session.

«This international support, despite the large number of abstentions among African and Latin American countries, shows that Russia cannot escape the scrutiny of the international community. An independent monitoring of the situation in Russia is imperative due to the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in the country. It will be important for the civil society in Russia to have a focal point at the United Nations», said PEC President Blaise Lempen.

«Permanent Members of the Security Council of the United Nations are not above the law. The veto power in the Council in New York does not allow them to arbitrarily arrest opponents, close down independent media and commit war crimes», he added.

The resolution adopted expresses in particular its concern «at the mass forced shutdowns of civil society organizations, including the International Human Rights Centre “Memorial” and the Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and independent media outlets, including radio channels, television channels, online media and newspapers, including *Novaya Gazeta*, *Echo of Moscow* and the television channel *Dozhd*, the bans of foreign media and the targeted revocation of registration of foreign organizations by the Russian authorities, and also at the limited access of Russian civil society to information and communications infrastructure and the increase in censorship and disinformation».

Russia’s latest crackdown on independent journalists is another step to silence dissenting voices on the war in Ukraine. According to various sources, at least 27 journalists were arrested since President Vladimir Putin announced a “partial mobilization” of military reservists on Wednesday, September 21.

New resolution on the safety of journalists and UN Convention

PEC also welcomes a new resolution on the safety of journalists adopted by consensus at the HRC. This resolution is the 13th of the United Nations on the safety of journalists and the 6th at the HRC since 2012. “It is an important testimony of the awareness of the problem at the diplomatic level the last ten years”, said PEC President. “The new one is very comprehensive and contains a detailed catalogue of measures which, if implemented, would improve the situation of media workers. We can only urge States to implement them”, he added.

Words are not enough, actions are needed. To better fight impunity, there is a need of an international binding instrument. In this respect, PEC supports the new campaign for an international Convention dedicated to the safety of journalists launched at a side event at the 51st session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on 30 September by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). Read more on : <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/un-ifj-leads-call-for-action-to-fight-impunity.html>

A record number of journalists have been killed this year, 97 until the end of September (79 for the whole year of 2021) see our list of casualties on: <https://pressemblem.ch/casualties.shtml>

The PEC hopes that the 10th anniversary of the UN Plan of action in November 2022 will be an opportunity to strengthen the fight against ever-growing threats to freedom of expression, at a time where many of our colleagues are taking risks to cover the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Read our latest report on the state of media in Ukraine: <https://pressemblem.ch/pec-news.shtml>

Next on our agenda : International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists 2 November

- Protecting media to protect democracy, high-level conference, Vienna, 3-4 November : 10th anniversary of the UN Plan of Action on the safety of journalists

- Annual PEC award for the Protection of Journalists. Geneva, mid-November

- PEC Annual report on Journalists killed in 2022, Geneva, mid-December

more info on : www.presseblem.ch