

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin
President of the Russian Federation
Ul.Ilyinka, 23
Moscow 103132
Russian Federation

30 January 2014

Dear President

UPHOLD THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY IN RUSSIA

I am writing to you to bring to your attention the hundreds of thousands of appeals that Amnesty International has collected from its supporters and activists around the world urging you to respect and uphold the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly in Russia. Eight Directors of Amnesty International Sections are in Moscow today to deliver this letter to your Office on their behalf. The individual petitions will be delivered to Russian embassies around the world.

336,412 Amnesty International activists and supporters from 112 countries are concerned that over the last two years, Russian authorities have passed a series of laws that restrict the rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly. These laws are hampering the development of civil society, stifling creativity, curtailing the expression of individual identities and undermining the valuable role of human rights NGO's in Russia.

We believe these laws, which:

- re-criminalise libel;
- restrict public protests;
- broaden the legal definition of treason and espionage;
- oblige NGO's receiving foreign funding to register as "foreign agents";
- make "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors" an offence; and
- criminalise insulting the religious feelings of believers

are inconsistent with Russia's international obligations and its own Constitution and must be repealed.

We are calling on you as the President of the Russian Federation - and the guarantor of the Russian Constitution and the human rights and freedoms enshrined therein - to take all necessary steps to uphold the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly and set Russia firmly on the path to the fair, inclusive, rights-respecting society that its people deserve.

Yours sincerely,

Salil Shetty
Secretary General