

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: 212-290-4700
Fax: 212-736-1300
Email: hrwnyc@hrw.org

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EU-Russia Human Rights Consultations Human Rights Watch Recommendations

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Human Rights Watch welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing preparations for the forthcoming EU-Russia human rights consultations. The consultations come at a difficult point in EU-Russia relations. Thus, it is all the more important for the EU to press forward with important human rights concerns, sending a signal that it will maintain its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, notwithstanding other competing interests. We also consider it of paramount importance that human rights concerns continue to be an integral part of the EU-Russia relationship at all levels. We therefore hope to see the EU use every opportunity to impress upon its Russian counterparts the significance it attaches to respect for human rights and rule of law as a cornerstone of its engagement. The need to convey this message in unequivocal terms is becoming all the more pressing in light of the rapidly deteriorating human rights environment in Russia.

We firmly believe that the EU's potential to promote human rights in Russia—or indeed to stop further rollback in fundamental rights and freedoms—can be realized only if it is willing to move beyond seeking agreement on general commitments to clearly articulating the kinds of specific steps it wants to see Russia take to address its concerns. Below we highlight a number of such steps falling in a range of priority areas.

This submission highlights Human Rights Watch's key concerns regarding Russia's compliance with its international human rights obligations in several areas of our research.

The armed conflict over South Ossetia and its aftermath

The armed conflict over South Ossetia has taken a devastating toll on civilians in South Ossetia and in other areas of Georgia. Human Rights Watch documented violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict. Below we describe violations by Russian and Ossetian forces that took place in areas under Russia's effective control. We will provide our documentation about violations by Georgian forces in the context of the EU's human rights dialogue with Georgia.

Human Rights Watch found that after Georgian forces launched its offensive on South Ossetia the night of August 7-8, Russian forces used indiscriminate weapons, particularly Grad and Uragan rockets in civilian areas, during its counter-offensive. Human Rights Watch also documented Russian use of cluster munitions in Ruisi and two locations in Gori district. Demining organizations documented Russian cluster munitions use in several additional locations. We have documented civilian deaths as a result of the Russian use of cluster munitions.

Under the law of occupation Russian forces have an obligation to ensure protection for civilians in areas where it is in effective control of territory. But Russian forces failed to do so. After Georgian forces retreated from South Ossetia, Ossetian volunteer militias systematically torched and looted ethnic Georgian enclave villages (i.e., those that were under Tbilisi's administration). Several South Ossetian militia members told HRW this was being done so that the Georgians would never come back.

Most villagers had largely fled before the assault. On August 13 Russian forces set up checkpoints leading to some of these villages, which led to a reduction in looting and which demonstrated that Russian forces were capable of taking action to protect civilians. But by the next day the checkpoints were removed and looting and torching resumed.

In the Gori and Karaleti districts of Georgia, of which Russian forces were also in effective control, Russia's failure to ensure protection created a security vacuum in which Ossetian militias and criminal elements had free reign to attack residents. Human Rights Watch documented numerous acts of looting, house burnings, and beatings. We also documented two acts of rape and several killings in these areas.

Ossetian forces operating in areas effectively controlled by Russian forces unlawfully detained and ill-treated civilians. At least 160 civilians were held in appalling conditions in the Tshkinvali police detention center, most of them elderly people including elderly women. Most were from the enclave villages, some were rounded up in Gori district. Some of the men were beaten on the way to the detention facility. Many men were forced to work, e.g. to gather decaying corpses from the streets and bury them. They received no compensation for their work which constitutes forced labor, a violation of international humanitarian law. All of the detainees were released/exchanged for Ossetian detainees.

Ossetian forces tortured several Georgian soldiers and executed at least one soldier in their detention. We documented four cases of torture of Georgian soldiers held by Ossetian forces. We documented the extrajudicial execution of a Georgian soldier. In a second case, Georgian soldiers also stated that another Georgian military serviceman detained among them, who was an ethnic Ossetian, was taken away during their detention. They never saw this soldier again. One Georgian soldier reported that he had been told the man was killed “as a traitor.” In yet another case, a South Ossetian counterintelligence officer told Human Rights Watch that his forces had executed an armed Georgian man whom they had captured and disarmed. Russia should have, but failed, to ensure that the Georgian soldiers held in South Ossetia had prisoner-of-war status and privileges.

The EU should urge Russia to:

- Not impede ESDP and international human rights monitoring missions;
- Put an end to looting, attacks and threats against civilians in all areas under effective Russian control;
- Publicly acknowledge and respect and implement the right of all people displaced by the conflict, including ethnic Georgians, to return to their homes and facilitate their return. Russia should prevail on authorities in South Ossetia to make clear that all people, including ethnic Georgians from the enclave villages of South Ossetia, have the right to return and live in their homes in safety and dignity, and take measures to ensure that they may return;
- Make every effort to assist demining organizations with clearance and risk education in contaminated areas, including by providing unfettered access and providing strike data, to prevent injuries and casualties among the civilian population;

- Investigate and hold accountable those among Russian forces responsible for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Because Russia has effective control in South Ossetia it should investigate violations committed by South Ossetians and hold their perpetrators accountable;
- Ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Illegal extradition of refugees and asylum seekers as a means to fight “international terrorism” in Russia

Recent years have seen an increase in collaboration between Russian security services and Russia’s partners of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in handing over persons—particularly from Uzbekistan and China—fleeing their home countries due to political persecution. Following the creation of the “single registry of the security and special services of the SCO Member States” in 2005, return and extradition of asylum seekers and refugees¹ is now justified by the Russian authorities as necessary to curb the spread of fundamentalism and terrorism in the territories of these countries. Too often such returns and extraditions are carried out by Russian officials without following proper Russian legal procedures or in violation of international human rights law standards. In several cases, people are removed through abductions and illegal, administrative expulsions. Administrative expulsions are court ordered expulsions, executed by the police, on the basis that a non-Russian citizen has committed an administrative offence and should be expelled as a penalty. It is not to be used against refugees or those who otherwise enjoy political asylum. Although the Russian authorities use administrative expulsion as a legal basis for a person’s removal from Russia, this procedure is in fact invoked not as a penalty, but to effect an unlawful extradition to a country that had requested it on criminal charges that are often just a pretext for political and religious persecution. In a number of prominent cases, refugees and asylum seekers were unlawfully returned or extradited from Russia to their countries of origin, where they faced real risk of torture, unfair trial or imprisonment on false charges. This is a complete flouting of the international legal principle of *non-refoulement*, the cornerstone of refugee law, that prohibits the return of a refugee to persecution, as well as the obligation under the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Punishment or Treatment (CAT) and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights which prohibits the return of anyone who would face a real risk of

¹The term refugees and asylum-seekers are used here to refer to all persons seeking protection and asylum from the Russian government or those in need of international protection regardless of whether or not they are recognized by Russian authorities as having refugee status.

torture or inhuman or degrading treatment. Russia has also repeatedly flouted rulings by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) that it should halt the deportation of asylum seekers to Uzbekistan.

The Memorial Human Rights Center and Civic Assistance, a Russian nongovernmental organization that assists asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, documented cases of serious rights violations occurring prior and during deportations.² According to Civic Assistance, from 2003 to 2008 Russian authorities unlawfully returned seven Uzbek nationals suspected of involvement in Islamic “fundamentalist” organizations to Uzbekistan.

The EU should press Russia:

- To immediately cease the return of persons to places where they risk torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, a practice prohibited by article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the European Convention on Human Rights to which Russia is a party.
- To respect and abide by the European Court of Human Rights decisions to stop extraditions of asylum seekers from Russia to the countries of origin.

North Caucasus/Counterterrorism

The armed conflict in Chechnya has affected the stability and security of communities across the North Caucasus and continues to do so. The situation throughout the region remains volatile and marked by impunity and ongoing serious human rights abuses in the name of counterterrorism.

Chechnya

Although in Chechnya, the armed conflict has subsided and parts of the capital, Grozny, have been rebuilt, security forces continue to use torture and illegal detention, and impunity for abuses is rampant. Human Rights Watch remains deeply concerned about impunity for crimes committed by federal and local military, security, and law-enforcement forces during both Chechen wars and a growing atmosphere of intimidation fostered by the government in Chechnya to inhibit human rights monitoring and accountability for human rights abuses.

² Memorial Human Rights Center and Civic Assistance, “Refugees from Uzbekistan in CIS countries: Threats of Extradition,” <http://www.memo.ru/2007/09/26/2609071.htm>; Civic Assistance, “Removal of Refugees as a Would-be Counter-Terrorism Measure,” <http://www.refugee.ru/presrelis/vysylka.htm>.

Two recent cases illustrate the danger to those who speak out about human rights problems. On August 3, 2008, 42-year-old MokhmadSalakh Masaev was abducted and “disappeared” in Chechnya, less than a month after a newspaper published his account of ill-treatment in Chechnya. The kidnappers forced Masaev into their vehicles and drove off. A local police station refused to register the report on the abduction filed by Masaev’s brother Oleg. Moreover, Oleg Masaev’s conversation with the policemen led him to the conclusion that MokhmadSalakh had been abducted by Chechen law enforcement agencies acting on informal instructions of the republic leadership.

Earlier this year, Masaev told Human Rights Watch that in September 2006 he was abducted from a mosque in Gudermes and held in an illegal detention facility until January 21, 2007. He reported being beaten on several occasions, accused of being a Wahhabi and a collaborator with insurgents, held in inhumane conditions, and subjected to death threats. No charges were filed against him when he was released by his captors in early 2007.

Human Rights Watch is deeply concerned for Masaev’s safety and well-being and fears that he might be at risk of torture for speaking out about his treatment in illegal detention by Chechen officials.

In another example, in June 2008, Chechen law enforcement officers detained for several hours four staff members of the Grozny office of the Memorial Human Rights Center as they attempted to film a building reportedly formerly used as an illegal detention facility. Before their release they were harassed and threatened with execution, and their belongings were seized and tampered with.

The EU should call on Russia to:

- Ensure access to the region for international monitors, including the UN Working Group on enforced and involuntary disappearances and the Special Rapporteurs on torture and extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, in full agreement with the requirements for conducting visits that these procedures; terms or reference set forth;
- Ensure meaningful accountability mechanisms to bring perpetrators of serious abuses to justice and ensure transparency regarding investigations and/or prosecutions undertaken, including their outcome;

- Immediately stop the practice of enforced disappearances, abduction-style detentions, and other abuses perpetrated in particular by security services, military, and law-enforcement agencies;
- In cases of arrest, ensure that all procedural guidelines are fully observed and family members are provided adequate information on the status and whereabouts of their arrested relatives.

European Court of Human Rights Judgments

In 42 rulings to date (two more judgments are expected on October 9, 2008), the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has repeatedly found Russia responsible for abuses in Chechnya, including torture, “disappearances,” and extrajudicial executions. Russia has generally paid out compensation to victims. But it has failed or refused to carry out meaningful investigations or to implement measures to address the underlying causes of abuse, which the court has obliged Russia to do. These judgments highlight Moscow’s failure to find those responsible for grave abuses in Chechnya

The court’s judgments provide a unique platform for the EU to engage effectively with Russia on the necessary changes in policy and practice that are required from Russia in order to fully comply with the court’s rulings. Russia’s effective implementation of these judgments will also help guarantee the integrity and efficacy of the ECtHR, which is the leading mechanism in Europe for ensuring that states uphold human rights commitments.

As a concrete first step towards Russia’s implementation of ECtHR judgments, the EU should press Russia to immediately conduct meaningful investigations to identify and prosecute the perpetrators of the violations identified by the ECtHR, particularly in cases in which the court has identified senior officers, such as Major-General Yakov Nedobitko, Major-General Vladimir Shamanov, and Colonel-General Alexander Baranov, to be responsible for human rights abuses.

We also call on the EU to insist that Russia implement other individual and general measures necessary to rectify past and ongoing human rights abuses in Chechnya.

Specifically, the EU should press Russia to:

- Pay in full the compensation and expenses as directed by the court ;

- Re-open investigations in those cases where the court has determined that prior investigations were inadequate and conduct them in a manner that ensures they are meaningful and effective;
- Undertake a thorough review and revision of domestic legislation and regulations regarding the use of force by military or security forces to ensure their compliance with human rights law;
- Conduct an in-depth inquiry into the conduct of investigations into abuses committed by Russian military servicemen, police and intelligence officials, and other forces in the Chechen Republic to establish why these investigations are so ineffective;
- Undertake an investigation to determine by what means secret detention has been allowed to occur routinely and on a large scale in Chechnya.

Deteriorating Human Rights Situation in the Republic of Ingushetia

The human rights situation in the republic of Ingushetia has significantly worsened since the summer of 2007, which saw a rise of insurgency attacks on public officials, security and law-enforcement personnel, and civilians.

In attempts to suppress the growing insurgency, a “special preventative operation” began in Ingushetia as of July 25, 2007; the local police force was put on permanent alert and 2500 troops of Russia’s Ministry of Internal Affairs were deployed to the region along with several dozen armored personnel carriers.

The Russian government’s response to these attacks, however, has not been in accordance with Russian and international law. The counterinsurgency practices adopted by the authorities of Ingushetia involve extra-judicial executions, unlawful, abduction-style detentions, and torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. These practices antagonize the local population and serve to further destabilize the situation in the republic. As in Chechnya, no meaningful investigation has been launched into these crimes, and law enforcement officials continue to violently detain and “disappear” those suspected of involvement with the insurgency. According to a leading Russian human rights organization, the Memorial Human Rights Center, in 2007 alone, security personnel were responsible for up to 40 extrajudicial executions in counterinsurgency operations. Memorial estimates that in 2007 alone, security personnel were responsible for up to 40 extrajudicial executions of local residents in counterinsurgency operations. Further, Memorial reported that in 2007, security forces committed 33 abduction-style detentions. Five

of those abducted subsequently disappeared and one was killed. Human Rights Watch has documented several of these cases.

Ingushetia's parliament has acknowledged the abusive nature of counterterrorism efforts in Ingushetia. A Temporary Parliamentary Commission was formed in Ingushetia to analyze the human rights situation. The committee released a report in February 2008, stressing that the lawless comportment by law enforcement and security largely contributed to the overall deterioration of the situation in the republic.³

The killing that created the greatest resonance in Ingushetia and caused vocal public protests was that of six-year-old Rakhim Amriev, who was killed on November 9, 2007, when security forces broke into his parents' house and immediately opened fire. Security forces launched the assault to detain an insurgency suspect, who was a distant relative of Amriev's parents, and who was not at their home when it was assaulted. They killed the six-year old boy and wounded his mother in the course of the operation. The day after Rakhim Amriev's killing, the procuracy opened a criminal case "on the death of a child during an operation." More than ten months after the incident, the investigation is still ongoing.

Servicemen and police officers responsible for human rights abuses in Ingushetia have not been brought to justice. If criminal cases into abuses are opened at all, the prosecutors fail to mount meaningful investigations. Many of those who have sought justice, as well as eyewitnesses to the abuses, have been subjected to verbal and physical threats.

Distressed by absolute impunity for the perpetrators, and the authorities' repeated claims that the situation in the region is normal, local residents organized several protest rallies in 2007 and 2008. The Ingush authorities have done their utmost to prevent protests, including by banning and violently dispersing planned events and attempting to silence media coverage.

In a striking move to intimidate independent observers, 16 visiting and local human rights advocates and journalists were variously threatened, abducted, beaten,

³ "Report 'On the findings of the Temporary Commission of the People's Assembly in the Republic of Ingushetia on Checking into the Facts of Violations of Rights of Citizens in the Republic of Ingushetia,'" (Доклад «Об итогах работы Временной комиссии Народного Собрания Республики Ингушетия по проверке фактов нарушения прав граждан в республике Ингушетия»), *Kavkazskiy Uzel*, February 24, 2008, <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/newstext/news/id/1208367.html>.

detained, and expelled from Ingushetia by security forces as they attempted to monitor two planned public rallies in November 2007 and January 2008.

The independent website *Ingushetiya.Ru* provided extensive coverage of human rights abuses and protest rallies in the republic. The prosecutor's office alleged that some materials published on *Ingushetiya.Ru* included "extremist" content and finally, on June 6, 2008, a court in Moscow ruled to have the website closed down for disseminating extremist materials. The owner of the website, Magomed Evloyev, was killed in a police car after he was arrested in the airport of Ingushetia. The investigation into his death was completed on October 6 this year, finding that Magomed Yevloev was killed as a result of an "involuntary shot" by one of the policemen escorting him in the car.

In order to prevent the human rights crisis in Ingushetia from becoming an endemic long term catastrophe, prompt and effective measures must be taken by the Russian government.

Russia's international partners, particularly the EU, should call on the Russian government to:

- Promptly bring counterinsurgency efforts in line with Russia law and international human rights obligations;
- Immediately stop the practice of extra-judicial executions, enforced disappearances, abductions, and other abuses perpetrated in particular by security services, military, and law-enforcement agencies;
- In cases of arrest, ensure that all procedural guidelines are fully observed and family members are provided adequate information on the status and whereabouts of their arrested relatives;
- Ensure meaningful accountability mechanisms to bring perpetrators of serious abuses to justice and ensure transparency regarding investigations and/or prosecutions undertaken, including their outcome;
- Ensure access to the region for international monitors, including the UN Working Group on enforced and involuntary disappearances and the Special Rapporteurs on torture and extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, in full agreement with the requirements for conducting visits that these procedures' terms of reference set forth;
- Sign and Ratify the UN Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances;

- Foster a favorable climate for journalists and human rights defenders to do their work in the region;
- Put an end to disproportionate restrictions on freedom of assembly in Ingushetia and stop harassment of organizers of public protests.

The 2005 Nalchik terrorist attack trial

On October 2, 2008 a court in Kabardino-Balkaria will have its third session to conclude if there are enough jurors to continue with a trial of fifty-nine men for leading an armed uprising on October 13, 2005 in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria. At least 12 of them have alleged that they were tortured and then forced to sign self-incriminating statements. Medical documentation indicates that more than half were beaten.

Human Rights Watch reviewed forensic examination reports for all 59 defendants. The examinations were conducted by authorities and document severe injuries that many of the defendants sustained during and after their arrest.⁴ Injuries included concussions and severe bruising, in some cases, covering their entire bodies. In most cases the causes of the injuries are noted as “blows caused by a blunt hard object at close range.” The reports strongly indicate that the majority of the defendants were brutally beaten. One examination called for the detainee to be referred for an expert examination due to life-threatening injuries.

Some of the defendants have complained about the torture to the prosecutor’s office and asked for the alleged confessions to be excluded from the case. The prosecutor’s office conducted inquiries, but despite forensic medical evidence, has taken at face value law enforcement officials’ claims that they acted within the framework of the law. To date, it has refused to open a criminal investigation, although the allegations of abuse did not cease. The defendants’ lawyer has told Human Rights Watch that his clients experience physical abuse from their guards while being escorted to and from the court building. They have also reported being insulted by their guards and ordered to sit/stand in “humiliating positions.”⁵

One of the defendants is Rasul Kudaev, a former Guantánamo Bay detainee whom the United States returned to Russia in March 2004. Local police and security forces

⁴ Human Rights Watch, “Russian Trial a Test for Ban of Use of Evidence Obtained Under Torture,” <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2008/02/01/russia17968.htm>.

⁵ Human Rights Watch phone interview with one of the lawyers for several defendants in the trial, September 29, 2008.

arrested him ten days after the Nalchik attacks. Kudaev's lawyer told Human Rights Watch that her client was severely beaten in detention and could not walk without assistance when she saw him on October 26, 2005. According to Kudaev's mother, Fatimat Tekaeva, Kudaev was home on the day of the attack. She witnessed his arrest and told Human Rights Watch in a 2005 interview that about two dozen men dressed in camouflage and masks arrived in armored vehicles, cars, and trucks, armed with automatic weapons and sniper rifles, and swarmed onto the property. They beat Kudaev as they handcuffed him and hustled him across the yard. Three days later, his lawyer described Kudaev's wounds to a local journalist: "Rasul couldn't hold up his head. On the right side of his face there was a large hematoma, his eye was full of blood, his head was a strange shape and size, his right leg was broken and he had open wounds on his hands."⁶

Russia is a party to the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Under all three treaties Russia has obligations to prohibit all forms of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, to punish those who resort to such actions, and to ensure that no evidence obtained in violation of the prohibition can be used in courts.

The EU should urge Russia:

- To start an immediate, independent and effective investigation into allegations of torture and other cruel treatment of the defendants and bring to justice those responsible for these crimes.
- To ensure that all defendants receive access to qualified legal counsel and fair trial in accordance with international law and standards set by the Russian Constitution and Criminal Code.

Restrictions on Russian Civil Society

Russia's 2006 NGO law subjects Russian and foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to excessive government scrutiny and unlawful government interference. The law grants state officials excessive powers to interfere in the founding and operation of NGOs. Organizations may be denied registration for presenting documents "prepared in an inappropriate manner" or if an organization's

⁶ Human Rights Watch, Russia – "The Stamp of Guantanamo: The Story of Seven Men Betrayed by Russia's Diplomatic Assurances to the United States," vol. 19, no. 2(D), March 2007, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/russia0307/>, p. 23.

activities are considered objectionable. The law imposes onerous reporting requirements on NGOs, and allows “planned” and unplanned audits which can happen at any time and for any length of time. During audits and reports, the law gives the authorities unlimited discretion to request documents for inspection and to interpret them, including for compliance with the constitution, laws, and “interests” of Russia in the broadest terms. The law also places onerous documentation requirements and unreasonable bureaucratic hurdles on NGOs.

Authorities implement the NGO law selectively to harass organizations that work on issues that are considered controversial, that may be capable of galvanizing public dissent, or that receive foreign funding. They also use tax inspections, inspections for fire code or labor code compliance, and police raids, and politically motivated criminal charges to harass and intimidate such organizations. Many NGOs are vulnerable to being targeted under the 2002 Law on Countering Extremist Activity, which designates certain forms of defamation of public officials as extremist and allows any politically or ideologically motivated crime to be designated as extremist. Those most targeted by all of these measures are NGOs and activists that are outspoken on controversial topics of Russian government policy, such as human rights violations in Chechnya or human rights more broadly, or on organizations that are in some way affiliated with or viewed as supportive of the political opposition.

Human rights defenders have been targeted with threats and violence, and tactics such as those described above. In just the last six months, Human Rights Watch has received credible and disturbing claims of harassment, beatings, threats, enforced disappearances, and illegal detentions of human rights defenders from the North Caucasus and other regions of Russia. This harassment of NGOs and human rights defenders is an unmistakable part of the Russian government’s efforts to weaken—in some cases beyond recognition—the checks and balances needed for an accountable government.

It is important that the EU make clear that several of the NGO law’s provisions and their implementation clearly violate international human rights standards, are more restrictive than NGO regulatory practices in Europe despite Moscow’s statements to the contrary, and are intended to prevent the effective exercise of basic civil and political rights such as freedom of expression and association. Indeed, a Council of Europe panel of experts found, before the law’s final passage, that the draft violated Council of Europe standards for best practices for the regulation of NGOs as well as

the European Convention on Human Rights.⁷ While the Russian government responded only partially to the Council of Europe experts concerns, members of the Russian parliament and others made misleading public statements suggesting, incorrectly, that the law as adopted reflected Council of Europe concerns and was not substantially different from its counterparts in European states. The EU should call on the Russian government to adhere to its commitments to uphold freedom of expression and association.

The EU should recommend that Russia:

- Foster an environment in which civil society can operate freely by imposing only those obligations and burdens on NGOs that are compatible with international standards and absolutely necessary, and strictly defining the terms under which the government can interfere in legitimate private citizen activity;
- Amend the 2006 NGO law to streamline the registration process so that NGOs can register quickly and with little hassle, provide recourse for violations of the NGO law other than liquidation which can compel or help noncompliant NGOs to come into compliance, and remove the most restrictive and intrusive provisions of the law such as those that allow the authorities to conduct unlimited inspections and attend all NGO events;
- Remove the stifling oversight of international NGOs by the government. The NGO law now requires that international NGOs give advance notice of projects and their funding, and allows the authorities, with broad discretion, to ban projects or parts of projects;
- Issue standing invitations to and facilitate the work of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, specifically: the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders; the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions; and the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers;
- Investigate and prosecute attacks on human rights defenders and journalists.

⁷ Sergei Strokan, "Strasbourg Assesses Russia's new NGO legislation" (Sovet Evropy voshel v polozheniia), Kommersant, February 15, 2006, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=649821> (accessed March 14, 2008).