

Resolution of the participants at the Black Sea NGO Forum on the situation with the CSO and civic activists in the region

The NGO representatives taking part in the 9th edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum are very concerned with the recent developments against the representatives of the civil society and with the expansions of limitations for the work of civil society in a several countries of the Black Sea region. The governments of those countries have introduced measures to constrain civic space at the national level.

The legislative regulations posing bans for the civil society to receive funding from the international foundations or classifying the civil society representative as foreign agents put civil society under threat.

In a number of countries the representatives of civil society are attacked physically, they are stigmatized and harassed.

The governments routinely repress the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly of the representatives of the civil society organizations, including media. Furthermore, countries such as Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus got further criminally charging and detaining representatives of the civil society organizations who were expressing their political opinions, participating in assemblies or criticizing the regime.

The nature of these fabricated criminal cases, omissions of due process guaranties and the justifications of court decisions are the main determinants to qualify people as being confined for conscience and expression of ideas; these people are political prisoners.

The undersigned Black Sea NGO Forum participants recall the state that the crackdown on human rights defenders and independent civil society is a threat to international peace and security.

For this, the Black Sea NGO forum participants call to the states to create and maintain a safe and enabling environment for civil society in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders:

- Ensure that civil society actors can seek, secure and use resources;
- Ensure access to justice, and accountability, and to end impunity for human rights violations and abuses against civil society actors;
- Release all civil society representatives and politicians - prisoners of conscience in Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus and close all cases against them immediately and without conditions.

Black Sea NGO Forum participants call to the European Commission and its External Action Service as well as European Parliament, to have this issue as a main priority during the policy making towards non-EU countries of the Black Sea region as well as put it on the table during their talks with governments of the appropriate countries.

We express our solidarity with all political prisoners of the region and ready to cooperate with other networks and organisations for their immediate release and an end of their prosecution.

This Resolution was initiated by "Protection of rights without borders" Human Rights NGO – Armenia and "Free Citizen" Civic Initiatives Support Center – Armenia.

Participants of the Black Sea NGO Forum:

Activi pentru Viitor, Romania

Altruism Association, Republic of Moldova

Analytical Center on Globalisation and Regional Cooperation, Armenia

Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs of Belarus, Belarus

Association "Institute for Social Prospects", Russia

Black Sea Branch Of Ukrainian Environmental Academy Of Science, Ukraine

Black Sea Centre for Environmental Information and Education (BSCEIE) - Branch Dobrich

Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN), Bulgaria

Broadcasting Monitoring Centre, Armenia

Caucasus Green Area, Georgia

Caucasus Research Resource Center, Armenia

CCC Creative Center, Ukraine

Children's Fund, Azerbaijan

Economic Research Center, Azerbaijan

Ednannia (Joining Forces): Initiative Center to Support Social Action, Ukraine

Foundation for Education and Development, Republic of Moldova

Human Rights Center (HRIDC), Georgia

IDIS Viitorul, Republic of Moldova

International Business Development and Investment Promotion Center, Georgia

International Fundraising Consultancy, Ukraine

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, Georgia

Journalists' Club "Asparez", Armenia

Local Democracy Agency Armenia, Armenia

Local Democracy Agency Georgia, Georgia

Local Democracy Agency of Dnipropetrovsk Region, Ukraine

MITLA Agency Of Changes, Ukraine

National Center for Human Rights Defenders (CNADO), Republic of Moldova

National Youth Council Moldova, Republic of Moldova

National Youth Council Romania, Romania

Non-Government Youth Organization "Association "We Plus", Ukraine

Novapolis Association, Romania

Novorossisk NGO, Russia

Organization Of Izmail City Council "Izmail Office Of Investments Support", Ukraine

PA EcoContact, Republic of Moldova

Protection of rights without borders NGO, Armenia

Public Association for Assistance to Free Economy / Public Initiatives Center, Azerbaijan

Reanimation Package of Reforms, Ukraine

Social Strategical Research and Analytical Investigations Public Union, Azerbaijan

Society & Legal Studies Foundation, Turkey

The Civic Resource Centre, Romania

The Experts for Security and Global Affairs Association, Romania

The Platform for Active Citizenship and Human Rights Partnership, Republic of Moldova

Togliatti Community Foundation, Russia

Ukrainian Coalition for Legal Aid, Ukraine

Women's Association for Rational Development (WARD), Azerbaijan

Youth For the World, Georgia

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