

Prosecution of journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva in the Russian Federation: UK statement

World news story

Delivered by Nicola Murray, Deputy Head of Delegation, at the OSCE Permanent Council on 2 July 2020.



The UK shares the concern expressed by OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media regarding the ongoing prosecution of Svetlana Prokopyeva in the Russian Federation. Ms Prokopyeva faces a charge of “publicly justifying terrorism” which can carry a prison sentence of up to seven years.

Ms Prokopyeva, a journalist with Radio Ekho Moskv, had been commenting on a terrorist attack in October 2018. As the RFOM said in his statement of 17 March this year, Ms Prokopyeva’s comments, however critical, had nothing to do with the promotion or support of terrorism, and we echo his call for the charges to be dropped.

We note this prosecution takes place in the context of ongoing pressure on the few remaining domestic independent media outlets in Russia and continued impunity for those who have committed violent crimes against journalists. We remind the Russian delegation of our many commitments on the right to freedom of expression, including, as set out in Moscow 1991 “the right of the media to collect, report and disseminate information, news and opinions”.

As States agreed, any restriction in the exercise of this right will be prescribed by law and in accordance with international standards. We reiterate that independent media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government, and are of particular importance in safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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