

UK statement on the murder of Boris Nemtsov

Mr Chairman,

27 February marks the fifth anniversary of the murder of Boris Nemtsov in Moscow. Mr Nemtsov was shot as he walked across Bolshoi Moskvorestky Bridge, close to the Kremlin. At the time of his death, Mr Nemtsov was a member of the Yaroslavl Regional Duma, and was recognised as a leading figure within the Russian opposition. Mr Nemtsov had previously served as a Member of the Russian Parliament, Governor of the Nizhny Novgorod Region and Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation.

We extend our sincere and continued condolences to Mr Nemtsov's family and friends on the anniversary of this tragic event.

We welcome the report by OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Special Rapporteur, Ms Margareta Cederfelt, into the murder, published last week. This comprehensive document draws on the many investigations by international bodies to date, and identifies a number of remaining issues. Ms Cederfelt summarises the key criticism of the investigation and trial into Mr Nemtsov's murder as allegations of:

- An incomplete investigation leading to a criminal case with numerous inconsistencies.
- A judicial process in which the defendants were subjected to torture
- An unclear role of the security services in the investigation
- No answers as to who ordered the assassination of Mr Nemtsov and why

As Ms Cederfelt notes,

“the murder of a politician is not only devastating for their loved ones – but it is also an attack on democracy... it is crucial that attacks on politicians are subject to thorough, impartial and transparent investigation.

We agree that any investigation should be carried out by the Russian authorities, and we urge Russia to renew efforts to identify the person or persons who ordered the murder of Boris Nemtsov five years ago. Holding the instigators of this horrific crime to account would go some way to ending the culture of impunity for attacks on political activists, journalists and human rights defenders in the Russian Federation. It would also act as a demonstration of Russia's adherence to OSCE principles and commitments, including the rule of law.