



The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

www.conservativehumanrights.com

AN INQUIRY INTO HUMAN RIGHTS IN RUSSIA

March-April 2018

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission will hold an inquiry into human rights in Russia. The inquiry will involve two oral evidence hearings held in Parliament, to which we will invite particular experts to appear as witnesses, as well as an open invitation for written submissions. The two hearings will be held at 6pm on Tuesday 17 April and Tuesday 24 April.

Written submissions can be sent to Benedict Rogers, Deputy Chair of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, at benedictrogerscphrc@gmail.com, any time by 18.00 GMT on Wednesday 18 April 2018.

There is no specific length required, although we would suggest no more than five pages unless absolutely necessary. Submissions should focus on the current human rights situation, include specific examples of any human rights violations, whether incidents or legislation, include recommendations for what the United Kingdom could do to address the human rights situation in Russia, and should include contact details and institutional affiliation where appropriate.

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission will, based on evidence received in writing and in the two hearings, produce a report, to be published in May 2018.

Context and scope of the inquiry

Presidential elections in Russia are scheduled for 18 March 2018. Today, Russia is described by many experts and dissidents as being more repressive than it has ever been in the postSoviet era. This inquiry will examine whether or not this accusation is fair, and in what ways any repression is being implemented. The inquiry will seek evidence on a wide range of human rights issues, including but not limited to:

- Freedom of expression, including online
- Freedom of assembly ▪ Freedom of the press
- Freedom of religion or belief
- Space for civil society
- The use of State propaganda
- Torture
- Surveillance and anti-terrorism laws
- Right to fair trial
- Right to free and fair elections

The inquiry is also interested to receive evidence of Russia's conduct in eastern Ukraine and Crimea.

The British Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary and others have repeatedly spoken out strongly against actions by Russia, both its violations of human rights internally and its threatening behaviour to Western democracies as well. For all these reasons, the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission has decided to hold this inquiry into human rights in Russia, in the hope that it will be a constructive contribution to British foreign policy.

About the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission:

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission is a body established to highlight international human rights concerns, and thereby inform, advise and enhance the party's foreign policy. Freedom and human dignity should be at the heart of foreign policy and the Commission aims to ensure that the importance of fundamental human rights is kept high on the political agenda.

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission was set up by the then Shadow Foreign Secretary with Gary Streeter MP as the founding Chairman. The Commission is currently chaired by Fiona Bruce MP, and since its creation the Commission's chairs have included Stephen Crabb MP, Tony Baldry MP and Robert Buckland MP.