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ENEMO Calls the Russian Federation to Halt Intimidation on Golos

The European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) strongly condemns the intimidation of leaders of Russian election observer organization - Golos, member of ENEMO.

On July 7, 2015 the law enforcement authorities raided the apartments of the co-chairmen of the board of the Golos Movement, Grigory Melkonyants and Roman Udot, as well as the executive director of the Interregional Public Foundation-Golos, Tatiana Troynova. Later the same day, the Golos office in Moscow was also raided. As a result of extensive house and office searches, which were conducted with some procedural violations, documents and electronic equipment have been confiscated and seized by the authorities. This comes after the case being filed against the head of the regional office "Golos-Volga", Lyudmila Kuzmina. Mrs. Kuzmina was allegedly accused of not paying the taxes on money donated from the central fund of Golos in 2010-2012. Furthermore, Ms. Kuzmina was threatened with a psychiatric examination by the Russian prosecutor's office in April 2015.

Worth noting, that this is not the first time that Golos has come under significant pressure from Russian authorities. Prior to the parliamentary elections of 2011 and prior to the Moscow mayor elections of 2013, Golos was subject to state intimidation. In 2011 Golos was fined for false accusations of breaching the election law for publishing an Interactive Map of Election Fraud and in 2013 the organization was fined and forced to stop its activities for not registering as a "foreign agent". Back in December 2011, ENEMO has issued statements in reaction to intimidation of Golos¹.

ENEMO is strongly alarmed by the attempts of the state to threaten independent election observer organization and its activists. ENEMO considers that the house searches represent direct intimidation of Golos activists aimed at hindering and restricting the monitoring work of the reputable observer organization in Russia prior to the upcoming local elections in September. These latest actions are part of the larger crackdown on civil society organizations and independent activists in Russia in an attempt to silence critical voices in the country.

Being the largest and recognized citizens' observer group in Russia, Golos observation efforts are critically important for ensuring transparency and increasing the trust in elections in the country. As in the case of all ENEMO members, Golos observation is conducted in accordance to the internationally recognized standards for domestic monitoring of elections.² Attempts to threaten Golos activists and prevent their non-partisan work would signal that Russian Federation does not welcome independent and professional election monitoring thus undermining the legitimacy of electoral process in Russia.

ENEMO condemns the persistent harassment and intimidation on the civil society and ENEMO member organization Golos. The Network calls upon the Russian Federation to respect the country's international commitments and guarantee the internationally recognized right of citizen observers to conduct election observation without restrictions.

¹ http://www.enemo.eu/golos_support.htm

² DECLARATION OF GLOBAL PRINCIPLES FOR NON-PARTISAN ELECTION OBSERVATION AND MONITORING BY CITIZEN ORGANIZATIONS and CODE OF CONDUCT FOR NON-PARTISAN CITIZEN ELECTION OBSERVERS AND MONITORS, as Commemorated on April 3, 2012, at the United Nations, New York, <http://www.gndem.org/declaration-of-global-principles>,

ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations) is a group of 22 civic organizations from seventeen countries of Europe and Eurasia. ENEMO seeks to support the international community's interest in and support for democracy in the post-communist countries of the OSCE region, to assess electoral conditions and the political environment, and to offer accurate and impartial observation reports. ENEMO international observation missions evaluate the electoral process using international standards for democratic and fair elections and benchmarks in the assessed country's legislation and constitution.

ENEMO member organizations are: Centers for Civic Initiatives - Bosnia and Herzegovina; Center for Democratic Transition – Montenegro; Center for Free Elections and Democracy – Serbia; Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society – Kyrgyzstan; Committee of Ukrainian Voters - Ukraine; Election Monitoring Center – Azerbaijan; GONG – Croatia; ISFED – Georgia; It's your choice – Armenia; Citizens Association MOST – Macedonia; Pro Democracy Association – Romania; Republican Network of Independent Monitors – Kazakhstan; Golos – Russia; Obcianske Oko – Slovakia; Belarusian Helsinki Committee – Belarus; Society for Democratic Culture – Albania; Monitoring Center – Montenegro; Promo LEX – Moldova; KRIIK Albania Association; Human Rights Centre Viasna – Belarus; Foundation for Support of Civic Initiatives – Kazakhstan; Kosovo Democratic Institute – Kosovo.