



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Russian Federation

RUS/01 - Galina Starovoitova

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 197th session (Geneva, 21 October 2015)

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

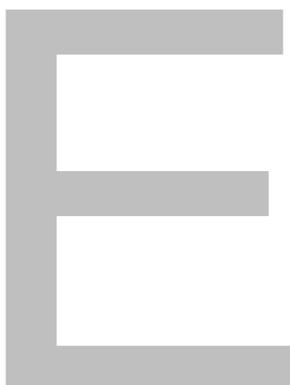
Referring to the case of Ms. Galina Starovoitova, a member of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, who was assassinated on 20 November 1998, and to the resolution adopted at its 192nd session (March 2013),

Recalling the following information on file provided over several years:

- In June 2005, two men, Mr. Akishin and Mr. Kolchin, were found guilty of Ms. Starovoitova's murder, with Mr. Akishin sentenced to 23 and a half years in prison, and Mr. Kolchin sentenced to 20 years, both by the St. Petersburg City Court, which, in its judgment, concluded that the murder had been politically motivated; in September 2007, two others were found guilty of complicity in the murder and sentenced to 11 and 2 years' imprisonment respectively; four other suspects were acquitted and released; there are open national and international arrest warrants for three other individuals; in its report of April 2008, the Prosecutor General's Office stated that the investigation and search operations to identify the other individuals involved in Ms. Starovoitova's murder were ongoing;
- Ms. Starovoitova was a prominent Russian human rights advocate and had denounced instances of high-profile corruption shortly before her assassination; in November 2009, the United Nations Human Rights Committee expressed "its concern at the alarming incidence of threats, violent assaults and murders of journalists and human rights defenders in the Russian Federation, which has created a climate of fear and a chilling effect on the media ...", and urged the Russian Federation "to take immediate action to provide effective protection and ensure the prompt, effective, thorough, independent, and impartial investigation of threats, violent assaults and murders and, where appropriate, prosecute and initiate proceedings against the perpetrators of such acts"; many States made similar recommendations during the first and second universal periodic reviews of the Russian Federation's compliance with its human rights obligations before the United Nations Human Rights Council (February 2009 and April 2013),

Recalling the information that Mr. Sergey A. Gavrilov, a member of the Russian delegation, provided to the Committee at the hearing held during the 126th IPU Assembly (Kampala, March-April 2012):

- It was very difficult to identify all the individuals involved in Ms. Starovoitova's murder, which had to be seen in the context of her political activism; after it became possible, in 2006, for convicts to obtain reduced sentences in exchange for cooperation in providing essential information about unresolved crimes, Mr. Kolchin had cooperated to help advance the recently resumed investigation into Ms. Starovoitova's murder; as a result, the authorities had been able to identify Mr. Mikhael Glushchenko, a former member of parliament and a businessman involved in large-scale criminal activities, as the presumed instigator of the assassination; Mr. Glushchenko was now a formal suspect in the investigation into Ms. Starovoitova's murder and was already serving a long prison term after having previously been found guilty of extortion;



- The State Duma was fully committed to shedding light on and establishing accountability for Ms. Starovoitova's murder and had set up an anti-corruption and security committee, which was monitoring the case and coordinating with the Prosecutor General's Office about further developments; it should be possible to communicate further information on the investigation and proceedings to the IPU in the coming months,

Recalling that, according to the complainants, Mr. Glushchenko was eventually charged as one of the organizers of the crime, and entered a plea bargain by agreeing to provide the name of the person who had ordered him to organize the killing in exchange for a reduced sentence,

Considering that, on 27 August 2015, Mr. Glushchenko was convicted to 17 years in prison as one of the organizers of the assassination; Mr. Glushchenko pleaded guilty and stated that he was acting under orders from Mr. Vladimir Barsukov (aka Kumarin), a former leader of the "Tambov criminal syndicate", who is already serving a prison term on a prior conviction; Mr. Glushchenko has appealed the sentence,

Considering that the complainant hopes that the investigation will now proceed to examine Mr. Barsukov's role in the assassination and will lead to the identification and prosecution of all other individuals involved, including the mastermind(s),

Further considering that the complainant found credible that Mr. Barsukov may have been involved in the assassination in some way, but believed that he most likely acted on orders from one or more other persons because there was no personal motive for him to have instigated the murder,

Taking into account that the State Duma has not provided information on the case since March 2012 and has not responded to repeated information requests, or to invitations to meet with the Committee,

1. *Notes with satisfaction* that the pursuit of justice in this case continues to make progress towards identifying all those involved in Ms. Starovoitova's murder, and *expresses the hope* that Mr. Glushchenko's admissions will allow the investigators to make further progress towards ensuring full accountability for those responsible for the crime, including the mastermind(s);
2. *Deeply regrets* the lack of response from the State Duma, and *recalls* that the Committee strives to foster dialogue and cooperation with the authorities of Russia, first and foremost with parliament, its primary interlocutor pursuant to its procedure; therefore, *sincerely hopes* that constructive dialogue is resumed shortly;
3. *Reaffirms* its conviction that the State Duma's continued interest in the case of a former colleague killed for having exercised her right to freedom of speech is critical to helping ensure that justice is done; and *urges* it to resume the monitoring of the proceedings and to keep the Committee apprised of future developments;
4. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the attention of the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
5. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.