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UPR Intervention for the Russian Federation, 16th Session April 29, 2013

We welcome the Russian delegation and commend them for the establishment of a national program to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

However, we are concerned by laws which restrict civil society, including human rights activists, and which have been used to justify the wave of unannounced inspections of civil society organizations in recent weeks.

We are also concerned by the arbitrary arrest, detention, and prosecution of peaceful protesters and opposition leaders, as well as reports of human rights violations in prisons. Allegations of ongoing torture and extrajudicial killings in the North Caucasus are particularly concerning.

Finally, we are concerned by an environment in which laws, including the overly broad law "On countering extremist activities," are used to arbitrarily restrict freedoms of expression, assembly, and religion.

We recommend:

- 1 Advocate for the removal of legislation that restricts civil society from receiving international funding, and cease unannounced inspections aimed at intimidating civil society organizations;
- 2 End the use of arbitrary detention, torture and excessive force by law enforcement officials; and
- 3 Propose amending the law "On counteracting extremist activities" to define extremism in terms of actual use of violence.

Ambassador Donahoe