



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Russian Federation

Decision adopted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians at its 167th session (virtual session, 30 January to 11 February 2022)



Galina Starovoitova © Courtesy photo / Ms. Starovoitova's family

RUS-01 – Galina Starovoitova

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Murder
- ✓ Impunity

A. Summary of the case

Ms. Galina Starovoitova, a member of the State Duma and Co-Chair of the Democratic Russia Party, was assassinated in November 1998. Ms. Starovoitova was “one of the brightest politicians of the new Russia”, who “is remembered as a prominent lawyer, a human rights activist and a public figure who did much to shape modern Russian society”, as stated in a joint letter of the Chairpersons of the State Duma and of the Council of the Federation dated 3 October 2017.

Following investigations and trial proceedings, Russian courts concluded that Ms. Starovoitova's murder was a contract killing aimed at halting her political activities. Many of the individuals linked to the assassination as the assailants or direct perpetrators of the crime were sentenced to prison terms of varying length. Some of them were convicted *in*

Case: RUS-01

Russian Federation: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim: Female opposition member of parliament

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.(1) (a) and (d) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint: March 1999

Recent IPU decision: February 2019

Recent IPU Mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing: Hearing with representatives of the State Duma, of the Prosecutor General's Office and with a source close to Ms. Galina Starovoitova and her lawyer, at the 137th IPU Assembly (October 2017)

Recent follow up:

- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Deputy Chairperson of the State Duma and of the Council of the Federation (March 2021)
- Communication from the complainant: (October 2020)
- Communication to the authorities: Letter to the Chair of the State Duma (December 2021)
- Communication to the complainant: January 2022

absentia and have remained at large.

Until recently, none of the organizers or instigators of the murder had been held accountable. According to one of the complainants, following the suspension and reopening of the investigation into the crime, a former member of parliament, Mr. Glushchenko, was investigated and subsequently convicted to 17 years in prison on 27 August 2015, as one of the accomplices/organizers of the assassination. Mr. Glushchenko appealed the sentence, which was upheld on appeal on 17 November 2015. Mr. Glushchenko pleaded guilty and designated Mr. Vladimir Barsukov (aka Kumarin) as the mastermind of the assassination.

According to official information provided by the State Duma in March 2021, on 5 April 2019, Mr. Barsukov was formally indicted for his involvement in Ms. Starovoitova's murder as one of the organizers of the crime. On 6 February 2020, a criminal case against him was transferred to a separate proceeding and the investigation was ongoing.

B. Decision

The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

1. *Thanks* the Russian parliamentary authorities for their cooperation and the information provided in their letters received in April 2019 and March 2021;
2. *Notes with satisfaction* that further steps have been taken to identify and bring to justice at least one of the alleged masterminds of Ms. Starovoitova's murder; *expresses deep concern*, however, about the length of proceedings and apparent lack of progress in the investigation; and *reiterates its firm hope* that the Prosecutor's Office and other competent authorities will give renewed priority and sufficient investigative means to help achieve a significant breakthrough in this long-standing case and to finally shed light on the identity, and guarantee legal accountability, of all perpetrators and masterminds of the assassination;
3. *Reaffirms*, in this regard, its conviction that the State Duma's continued interest in the case – within the boundaries of the separation of powers – is critical to helping ensure that justice is done and to sending a strong signal that the assassination of a parliamentarian for having exercised her right to freedom of speech will not be left unpunished; and *wishes* to be kept informed of any steps taken by parliament in this regard;
4. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the Prosecutor General's Office, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
5. *Decides* to continue examining the case.