

Joint statement on the Russian state's measures against lawyer Ivan Pavlov

18 May 2021

Russian Federation must end judicial harassment of lawyer Ivan Pavlov and Team-29

Ivan Pavlov is a prominent human rights lawyer and director of Team-29, an association of lawyers and journalists. The team has since 2015 focused their efforts on public access to government information and providing legal aid to victims of law enforcement abuses. They have worked on a number of sensitive and high-profile cases filed by Federal Security Service (FSB).

On April 26, the Moscow City Court held a pretrial hearing in a lawsuit to designate Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny's political and anti-corruption organizations as illegal extremist groups. Team-29 announced they would be representing the Anti-Corruption Foundation of jailed Kremlin critic Alexey Navalny.

Four days later, on April 30th, Mr. Pavlov's hotel room was searched by FSB officers, and Mr. Pavlov was detained and interrogated. Searches also took place at the Team-29 premises and Pavlov's residence. He is charged with "disclosure of the data of a preliminary investigation" in relation to his legal representation of former journalist Ivan Safronov, who is accused of high treason.

The charge against Pavlov (article 310 of the Criminal code) carries penalties varying from an 80,000 Rubles fine to an arrest of up to 3 months. Although Mr. Pavlov was later released from detention, he is banned from using telephone and internet.

Until now, Russian lawyers have for the most part been free to exercise their professional duties. The arrest and measures taken against Mr. Pavlov, however, is among the Russian and international lawyer community, viewed as connected to his professional representation of Navalny's organization.

Whether there may be issues concerning disclosure of data or not, the abovementioned actions against Mr. Pavlov and Team-29 represent an infringement of rights to freedom of expression and criminal due process. In our view, the detention and restrictions on Mr. Pavlov also violates the independence of lawyers and represents judicial harassment in contradiction to the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights.

The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers establish that no lawyer should be hindered in carrying out his or her professional duties. Lawyers should be free to practice their profession and legally represent their clients without external interference and without being identified with their clients or their clients' causes.

We therefore urge the Russian authorities to cease the prosecution and judicial harassment of Mr. Pavlov and Team-29, and to give due respect to the Rule of law and the professional rights and role of lawyers.

Oslo, 18 May 2021.

Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)

European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights (ELDH)

European Criminal Bar Association (ECBA)

Norwegian Bar Association, Human Rights Committee

Swedish Bar Association