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Campaign in defense of Oleg Sentsov

Informal union

All actors • Russia

Official position/function in relation to the conflict

Russian solidarity actions in defense of Oleg Sentsov are part of an international campaign to free the film director and other Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia. The campaign was heterogeneous, involving artists, primarily filmmakers, as well as civil society activists, human rights organizations, and opposition leaders. Basically, the activities of the Russian campaigners were aimed at publicizing the case of Sentsov and Kolchenko (the second Crimean defendant in the terrorism case along with Sentsov) and raising awareness of wider Russian society about it, attracting the attention of the international community and intergovernmental organizations (UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, European Union, etc.), as well as to collect humanitarian aid and money for lawyers for political prisoners.

Actions in relation to the conflict region

[In June 2014, the Memorial human rights society recognized Sentsov as a political prisoner. Further, Memorial made repeated statements in defense of Sentsov.](#)

[Russian filmmakers Alexander Sokurov, Vladimir Mirzoev, Alexei German Jr., Pavel Bardin, Andrei Zvyagintsev, and others made statements for the release of Oleg Sentsov. Sokurov also asked Putin to pardon Sentsov at a meeting of the Presidential Human Rights Council.](#)

[On 28 June 2014, during the closing ceremony of the Moscow International Film Festival, the President of the festival director Nikita Mikhalkov, supported the request to Vladimir Putin to assist in the release of Oleg Sentsov.](#)

[In December 2015, the Russian branch of Amnesty International campaigned to overturn the sentences of Sentsov, Kolchenko, and Gennady Afanasyev. Russian musician Boris Grebenshchikov took part in the campaign.](#)

[On 25 May 2018, during Oleg Sentsov's hunger strike, the Pussy Riot group published an open letter in the newspaper Le Monde, in which they called on French President Macron to demand that Putin release Sentsov.](#)

[On 21 May 2018, the Russian association of writers and journalists Svobodnoye Slovo published a statement "To save Oleg Sentsov." The statement was signed by 81 persons, as well as 33 members of the Petersburg PEN Club, 25 persons from the Free Historical Society Association of Scientists, as well as scientists, doctors, and activists.](#)

[Sentsov was also supported by the members of KinoSoyuz. On 23 May 2018, the President of Artdocfest festival Vitaly Mansky, published a statement on the KinoSoyuz website saying that he and other members of the union support Sentsov and express "admiration for his courage and fortitude."](#)

In Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other cities of Russia, mass actions and single pickets were held, signatures were collected under petitions demanding the release of the Ukrainian film director.