



## History and activities

- Established in 1977, after Helsinki Final Act was signed
- Human rights monitoring OSCE area, former SU, Norway
- Documentation, NEDC
- Support of civil society
- Advocacy
- EEA and IPPFoRB

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## NHC work on Russia



- Cooperation/support of civil society network: lawyers, human rights activists and journalists
- Advocacy and delegations to Norway, i.e. LGBT, prison visits
- Natalia Estimirova Doc Centre
- Anna Politkovskaya seminar
- Asylum policy in Norway



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## System of power



- Three elements, survived more or less 400 years (Igor Klyamkin):
- 1. Tsar (empire)/person at power
- 2. Religion /Ideology
- 3. «Rule of law»

Important condition – «war»/militarization of society, mobilisation to the war, to sacrifice life



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## Perestroika – «crazy 90s» or awakening of society

- Soviet Unions fall
- Glasnost and open of the borders
- Economic reforms 500 days vs political changes
- New NGOs,
- Post – empire, post traumatic
- Corruption and impunity
- Which democracy?



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## Chechnya

- Separatism after collapse of the Soviet Union
- 1. 1994 – 1996
- 2. war 1999 – 2007 as ATO
- Special region vs other regions
- Anna Politkovskaya, Natalya Estimirova
- Grave human rights abuses



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## Power key pillar 1\* - Ideology



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- Neither clear ideology, nor direction or any future vision – image of a «strong leader»!
- Gap after communism was replaced by:
  - Nostalgia after SU: superpower, stability, “everybody was afraid us”
    - The victory in the Second World War; attempts to rewrite history “right”
  - Religion and church close to authorities – traditionalism, conservatism;
    - legislation – offence of religion feelings, propaganda of LGBT
  - **\*Militarization** – Chechnya, Georgia 2008, Crimea annexation
    - “Russia is a castle”: ant-Western rhetoric as anti – democracy
    - “hybrid” informational wars, influence on populist leaders

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## TV vs Internet



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## Power key pillar 2: order vs «Rule of law»

- Executive, legitimate and judicial powers and institutions are not independent
- power to use violence (law enforcement bodies against its own people
- Law amendments directly contradict Constitution, against critical voices, opposition, activists



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## Power pillar 3: Foreign policy

- Nostalgia after the Cold War: wants to be a part of the game!
- preserve control over former SU
- West: Changes from friendly to enemies, due to democracy/NATO
- Worsening after speech in Munchen, annexation of Crimea
- Sanctions + Scripal, Hermitage Capital



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## Human Rights



- Repressive legislation
- Political prisoners: extremism, terrorism vs opponents, Ukraine
- Use of torture, CAT: every 5 th
- Freedom of organisation, -foreign



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## Power in society: changes in the air



- The state and society has never had trust to each other, therefore, society has been living by the codes, not laws; each family learnt to count on themselves and network
- 90s – emerge of unity groups, social, political, historical and other types of NGOs: in 2014 – 800 000 registered NGOs, - solidarity started to grow
- Organisational professionalism – administration, structure, demands, service minded, expertise on particular, concrete issues, as Prison Monitoring Commissions, migration

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## Society gains power

- Pressure - solidarity actions
- Navalny and generation change
- Emerge of opposition
- Trade unions are weak, but protests are growing and there is



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## Challenges

### • Internal

- Economic stagnation: «People is the new oil» – Pension reforms
- Around 20 mill in poverty
- Degradation of institutions: healthcare, education, public administration,
- Demography:

### External

- Self – isolation
- Sanctions
- Unpredictable authoritarian leadership and neighbour (militarization, hybrid war)
- Complicated internal situation, difficult to understand from outside

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## What do they want?

- Authorities
  - Status quo – power, strong hand
  - «Be with the West and against» (Lilia Shevtsova): superpower
  - Non engaged and loyal society
  - Stability and imitation

## Society

- Always adaptive, passive, non – politically engaged, - now ready for changes 80-90% (risk 70%) > less stability
- Strong hand < justice (80%)
- Do not count on authorities – growth personal responsibility



## What should be done?

- Follow own democratic principles and human rights values
- People vs Kremlin – «Russians»
- Dialogue is possible, but only with participation of civil society groups



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**We are now working on:**

- Release of Chechnya's foremost activist, Oyub Titiev
- To stand against an increasingly authoritarian regime in Hungary
- Turning around activists in Ukraine attacked by right-wing hat groups
- Support the new generation of democracy defenders in Russia
- To get the government to treat asylum seekers better, as UN demands
- To stop torture of LHBTI people worldwide
- To repel propaganda and abuse, with facts and documentation
- Better protection for corruption detectors globally