



**BY AIRMAIL**

His Excellency Alexander Vladimirovich  
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Minister of Justice  
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**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Email: [pst@minjust.ru](mailto:pst@minjust.ru)

Amsterdam, 2 December 2014

Subject: Killing of lawyer Vitaliy Moiseyev

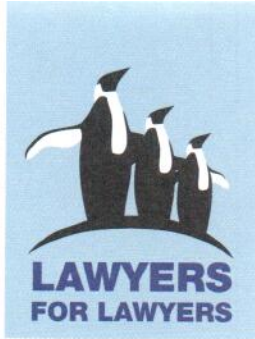
Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of Lawyers for Lawyers, an independent and non-political Dutch foundation which supports lawyers who are threatened or suppressed in the execution of their legal profession. Lawyers for Lawyers is committed to ensuring the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession throughout the world. In that context, Lawyers for Lawyers respectfully would like to express its grave concern about the killing of our colleague, lawyer Vitaliy Moiseyev.

Lawyers for Lawyers has been informed that Vitaliy Moiseyev and his wife Elena Moiseyeva were murdered on the morning of 24 October 2014. They were reportedly shot at least 30 times with a Kalashnikov rifle as they were leaving their house by car. Lawyers for Lawyers is concerned that the killing of Mr. Moiseyev is related to his work as a lawyer for the following reasons.

Mr. Moiseyev represented Sergey Zhurba, a deputy of the regional council of the Odintsovo region, who was a key witness in a case of a significant number of killings by members of the Orekhovskaya gang, a criminal organization active in Moscow particularly during the 1990s. This case concerned the head of the criminal gang, Dmitry Belking, and his accomplice Oleg Pronin. On 23 October 2014, Dmitry Belking and Oleg Pronin were found guilty of committing 22 murders and 11 attempted murders as well as a number of other crimes. Thus, the killing of Mr. Moiseyev happened the morning following the verdict against the leader of the gang. Moreover, the killing took place only a few hours before Vitaliy Moiseyev was to testify in court in relation to a separate case against leaders of the Orekhovskaya gang.

This is the second killing of a lawyer representing Sergey Zhurba in this case. Earlier this year, on 23 September, lawyer Tatiana Akimtseva was shot near her apartment. Allegedly, she had received threats before being murdered.



In this context, Lawyers for Lawyers urge your government to recognize the valuable role played by lawyers and to promote and support their work in line with the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1990 ('Basic Principles').

Paragraph 16 of the Basic Principles state that the Government is under an obligation 'to ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference'. Paragraph 17 stipulates : 'Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities'. Paragraph 18 states that 'Lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions'.

These principles are universally applicable. Therefore, your government is under an obligation to adequately protect and support its lawyers.

In view of the above, Lawyers for Lawyers urge you to make sure that a prompt, thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into the killing of Vitaliy Moiseyev will be carried out, so as to identify all those responsible, bring them before a competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the sanctions provided by law, as well as to guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of lawyers in the Russian Federation.

We thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We are confident of your good will and sense of justice and will continue to monitor this case closely.

On behalf of the President of Lawyers for Lawyers, Phon van den Biesen,

Sincerely,

**Lawyers for Lawyers**

Adrie van de Streek  
Executive director

*Copies of these letters were sent to:*

- *Roman Anatolievich Kolodkin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation in the Kingdom of the Netherland*
- *Ron J.P.M. van Dartel, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Russian Federation*