



By: *Tomorrow's Affairs Staff*

# When Russia evaluates the state of human rights - the bizarre report of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has made an extraordinary effort to prepare a report on human rights in various countries this year, despite daily attempts to defend its country's aggression against Ukraine.

The comprehensive annual report covers 42 Western countries, 7 of which are neither members of NATO nor the European Union (Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Ukraine, Switzerland, New Zealand, and Kosovo).

Understandably, the reports have been negative, similar to every previous one since 2011.

Such a bizarre concept was designed exclusively as a response to dozens of similar reports by Western governments and international organisations, which describe the state of human rights in Russia as unfavourable year after year.

Moscow confirmed such motives with the first report in December 2011 as its favourite method of denial.

Konstantin Dolgov, a senior diplomat, said then that the report was “not designed to respond to the criticism of foreign countries towards Russian reality, or an attempt to interfere in their internal affairs”. Therefore, it was.

## How are BMW and Mercedes violating human rights in the UK?

The West has not been spared from Russian assessments of severely and massively violating human rights, not only around the world but also regarding their own citizens.

Given the zero credibility of this report and its author, there is no reason to dwell on its details.

However, some findings deserve attention to illustrate how far Russia is from the concept of human rights, particularly protection, which it supposedly wants to tackle.

In a report on the state of human rights in the UK, Russia stated that the UK "positioned itself as a standard in the field of promotion and protection of human rights", even though it tried to "cover up the significant problems that exist in this area".

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded that the UK has been "hiding" these problems by finding material to support this in the reports of the UK government, NGOs, and particularly the media.

Most country reports, particularly those regarding the UK, focus on the "violation" of human rights of Russian citizens or sympathisers with Russian aggression since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

However, the diplomats who wrote the report show a colossal misunderstanding of the concept of human rights while fulfilling patriotic and business obligation to protect the interests of their country, even at the cost of provoking comedy.

They stated that BMW and Mercedes's dealers refused to service Russian embassy vehicles in London, insurance companies provided unfavourable conditions for car insurance, and banks restricted access to the embassy's accounts as cases of human rights violations in the UK.

In Moscow's opinion, human rights are being violated by the refusal of Christie's, Sotheby's,

and Bonhams to hold auctions of Russian art.

## Russian and Chinese concerns about the situation in the US

The US fared even worse. Moscow reported that the human rights situation in the US is "far below international standards for the protection of basic freedoms".

"The political confrontation between the two main political forces and their supporters, which has been escalating in the United States, has become the main cause of continuous social unrest throughout the country", was the conclusion of the Russian report on the US.

Probably for the sake of the appearance of impartiality, the section on the US in the Russian report, often referred to in similar reports from China, criticised the US policy of suppressing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic or poverty.

For the most part, there is no dilemma for Russia - the US "continues to grossly violate human rights both at home and abroad", whilst "actively using the rhetoric of human rights to justify interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states", and despite this, "continues to declare itself a global leader in the field of human rights protection".

## An unbroken tradition of repression

The Russian court banned the oldest human rights organisation in the country last January. The Moscow Helsinki Group was founded in 1976 by dissidents during the Soviet Union.

This was symbolically the last blow to human rights activism, which has been systematically stifled since the start of Vladimir Putin's rule, particularly after 2011 and the first Russian state report on human rights in Western countries.

Taking over the main package of authoritarianism from the Soviet Union, Putin's Russia embraced animosity towards human rights protection, which turned into one of the official marks of state policy.

The Soviet Union, along with its then Eastern European satellites, did not vote for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the founding document of the UN in 1948.

The Russian (Soviet) understanding of human rights was simply different. It was related to those rights that the state delegated to people, such as the right to work since the state was the only employer, not the protection of individual rights.

The unbroken tradition of widespread and systematic violation of human rights during the Soviet era also gave birth to modern Putin's Russia as a regime of complete negation and suppression of human rights.

## Russia's expulsion from the global protection of human rights

The culmination came with the aggression against Ukraine as a general violation of human rights, starting with the right to life (of Ukrainians).

This year's report, where Russia wanted to "play" on the international stage of human rights, confirmed its diabolical understanding

of this concept.

"The events of 2022 showed the deceitful Western approaches with the aim of causing as much damage as possible, and a "strategic defeat" of Russia and the Russian world", stated the introductory part of the report of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

When, the same text places human rights in the context of endangering the "Russian world", then it is clear that human rights can only exist if they serve the purpose of realising this aggressive, imperial, and violent concept.

Russia was suspended from the UN Human Rights Council by the overwhelming majority of members.

Russia was also excluded from the Council of Europe, an organisation of European states that has the role of protecting and promoting human rights. Russia also rejected the European Convention on Human Rights, the fundamental European document in this area.

The country expelled from the highest global echelons and European forums for its brutal violation of the protection of human rights dared to write its own version this year.