

Declaration in Solidarity with Russian Environmental NGO Ecodefense!

Ecodefense is one of the oldest environmental groups in Russia, founded in 1989 in Kaliningrad. It works in various regions of Russia including Moscow, Kaliningrad and Siberia (Kuzbass) and has already successfully stopped nuclear power plants and coal mines.

In 2014 the Russian government officially labeled Ecodefense as a “foreign agent”, because the organisation convinced a number of investors from Europe not to invest in a nuclear plant near Kaliningrad, which stopped the plant’s construction in mid-2013.

The Russian Ministry of Justice initiated 28 legal (administrative) cases against Ecodefense for non-compliance with the law, leading to fines totaling Euro 30,000, which the organization did not pay until now. Ecodefense turned to the European Court on Human Rights (ECHR) in the collective case “Ecodefense and Others vs Russia” together with 61 Russian civil society groups that were affected by the law on foreign agents.

In May 2019, the situation worsened even further: Russian authorities launched 5 criminal cases against Ecodefense. These charges could mean a jail-sentence of up to two years for the organisation’s director, Alexandra Koroleva.

Though Ecodefense is not the first NGO to refuse to pay its fines, it is the first case so far in which the authorities have launched a criminal case against a civil society organization. This is a dangerous precedent, which could lead to further crackdowns on the civil society of Russia!

Declaring Ecodefense a foreign agent as well as the criminal charges against the organization are clearly driven by political motives.

In solidarity with Ecodefense...

...we demand all charges against Alexandra Koroleva and her organization to be dropped immediately.

...we will actively spread information on the political repression of Ecodefense, to make sure their case stays in the public realm.

...we are collecting donations for Ecodefense to pay their – wrongfully imposed - fines, as this could help to ease their current situation.

Signed by:

350.org
AAPK – Anti-Atom Plenum Köln, Germany
AKU Schüttdorf, Germany
AntiAtomBonn, Germany
AntiAtom-Euskirchen, Germany
Arbeitsgruppe Schweiz-Kolumbien, Schweiz
Banktrack
BBU - Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz, Germany
BI STOPPT TEMELIN, Germany
Bürgerinitiative Umweltschutz Lüchow-Dannenberg, Germany
Citizens Awareness Network, USA
ClientEarth
Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe
Coal Action Network, UK
Colombia Solidarity Campaign, UK
Colombia Solidarity Denmark
Dachverband der Kritischen Aktionärinnen und Aktionäre, Germany
Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V., Germany
Earthlife Africa Jhb, South Africa
Ecoclub, Ukraine
Europe Beyond Coal
FERN, Belgium/UK
Friends of the Earth USA
Fundacja "Rozwój TAK - Odkrywki NIE", Poland
Global Energy Monitor, USA
Greenpeace
groundWork, Friends of the Earth South Africa
IIDMA – instituto internacional de derecho y medio ambiente, Spain
Klima-Allianz Deutschland, Germany
Latvian Environmental Protection Club
Les Amis de la Terre, France
London Mining Network, UK
MISEREOR, Germany
Naturfreunde Berlin
Naturfreunde Deutschlands
Nuclear Information and Resource Service, USA
Ökumenisches Netz Rhein-Mosel-Saar, Germany
Oil Change International
PowerShift e.V., Germany
Re:Common, Italy
Research Group CoalExit, TU Berlin, Germany
Umweltinstitut München, Germany
urgewald e.V., Germany
Vermont Yankee Decommissioning Alliance, USA
WWF Germany