

21 October 2010

North Caucasus, in particular the case of Oleg Orlov

Mr President, I give my full backing to this resolution, which is supported by my political group and calls for action in support of Sakharov awardee Oleg Orlov and what he stands for - namely opposition to the human rights violations that go on in the Northern Caucasus.

Let me say in this respect that I do not see myself and my Group reflected in the words of Mr Mirsky, who spoke earlier and criticised Oleg Orlov, saying that he should not use his status as a human rights defender to speak up against Mr Kadyrov. Any self-respecting democrat knows that you do not need a title, you do not need to be a human rights defender, and you do not need to be a member of Memorial or a Sakharov awardee to have the democratic right to criticise any head of State or Government.

I should also like to use this opportunity to endorse what our colleague Raül Romeva i Rueda said earlier. He called the attention of this Parliament - and also of the Commission and the Council and, in particular, Mrs Ashton - to the dangerous situation that is now developing in Western Sahara. I should like to request her to intervene so that the Moroccan authorities do not arrest the people of Western Sahara who are fighting against illegal occupation.

(The President cut off the speaker.)