

November 12, 2025

Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Office at Geneva
8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Dear Members of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing in support of the recent submissions to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) filed on behalf of Nika Novak, a Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) journalist and Russian citizen.

On May 2, 2024, the Press Freedom Center at the National Press Club, with the support of attorneys from Covington & Burling LLP, submitted a Petition to the UNWGAD requesting an opinion finding that Ms. Novak's continued detention by the Government of Russia is arbitrary and violates international law.

As detailed in the Petition, Russian authorities detained Ms. Novak on December 25, 2023, on charges stemming from her independent journalism for RFE/RL. Ms. Novak is currently serving an unjust four-year sentence in a penal colony in Irkutsk.

We are deeply concerned by reports that Ms. Novak has been placed in isolation and solitary confinement several times in recent months and has begun a hunger strike (her third) to protest her circumstances. Based on these developments and the risks they pose to Ms. Novak's health, Ms. Novak's representatives submitted an Urgent Appeal to the UNWGAD on October 9, 2025, detailing the worsening conditions of Ms. Novak's imprisonment.

We strongly urge the UNWGAD to consider and announce its opinion on Ms. Novak's case at the earliest opportunity, and greatly appreciate your urgency in expediting this matter.

Respectfully,

Committee to Protect Journalists
Freedom of the Press Foundation
International Press Institute
International Women's Media Foundation
National Press Club
PEN America
Press Freedom Center at the National Press Club
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
Society of Professional Journalists