**Statement by Russian and International Human Rights Group on the Unjust Sentence in Politically Motivated Case Against Russian Human Rights Defender Oleg Orlov**

**February 27, 2024**

We, 31 human rights organizations, condemn Moscow’s Golovinsky District Court’s sentencing today of Oleg Orlov, co-chair of Human Rights Defense Center Memorial, to 2 years and 6 months in prison on politically motivated charges of “repeatedly discrediting” Russia’s armed forces.

Orlov, 70, is a veteran human rights defender who has devoted his life to exposing rights abuses and seeking justice for victims. His “crime” was to protest the Kremlin’s war on Ukraine and the escalating political repression inside Russia. Orlov’s trial was a mockery of justice and an attack on the fundamental right to free expression. He and his legal team have said that they will appeal the verdict.

Russian authorities should quash Oleg Orlov’s conviction and release him immediately along with all those detained simply for exercising their basic human rights, including public criticism of government abuses. Key international actors should use their influence take all possible measures to obtain Orlov’s freedom and hold the Russian government accountable for its grave and persistent human rights violations.

**List of Signatories**

Human Rights Watch

Amnesty International

Norwegian Helsinki Committee

International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH)

OVD-Info

Front Line Defenders

Public Verdict Foundation

Civic Assistance Committee

Human Rights Defence Center "Memorial"

International Memorial Association

Crew Against Torture

Stichting Justice Initiative

Board of Civil Society Forum

Human Rights House Foundation

World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

The Netherlands Helsinki Committee

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland)

Movement of Conscientious Objectors

Freedom House

Citizens' Watch

International Protection Centre

Mass Media Defence Centre

Andrei Sakharov Institute

Freedom Files, Poland

International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)

Center for Civil Liberties, Ukraine

Anti-Discrimination Center Memorial (Belgium)

Human Rights Center Viasna (Belarus)

Belarussian Helsinki Committee

Östgruppen

Radio Sakharov