



**HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE
FOUNDATION**

Главе городского округа г. Воронеж
Александрю Гусеву
Россия, 394018 г. Воронеж, ул. Плехановская 10
e-mail: adm@cityhall.voronezh-city.ru

Oslo, 20 October 2013

Dear Alexander Viktorovich,

The Human Rights House Foundation hereby appeals to you to support Human Rights House Voronezh and to assist in resolving the issues with the lease of municipal facilities at 34, Tsyuruoy Street.

For more than 20 years the oldest civil rights organizations started working in the Voronezh region, that later merged into the Human Rights House (HRH) Voronezh, located at 34, Tsyurupy Street in the city of Voronezh. These premises are in municipal ownership and have been rented by two organizations within the Human Rights House community – Youth Human Rights Movement (YHRM) and Union Centre "Confederation of Free Labour" (CFL).

Human Rights House Voronezh is a community of socially-oriented civic, charitable and human rights organizations, well-known far beyond the borders of Voronezh and the Voronezh region, a region which is known to be one of the largest and oldest centres in Russia ensuring the observance and protection of human rights.

The activities of the participating organizations of Human Rights House Voronezh are acknowledged in Russia and abroad. They create a positive image of the city, the region and the country as a whole, illustrating the crucial role of civil society organizations in promoting mutual understanding and trust between the state and civil society. Different famous people come to Voronezh thanks to the Human Rights House: public figures like film directors and musicians from different regions of Russia and the world. Thanks to the work of our colleagues from Human Rights House Voronezh, civil society abroad knows about Voronezh as one of the centres of social activity in Russia.

On 17 May 2013, the "Confederation of Free Labour" received a letter from the Office of Property and Land Relations about termination of the lease of 34, Tsyurupy Street, with the requirement to leave the premises within three days. Later, a similar letter was sent to another tenant – the Foundation "Youth Human Rights Movement".

During the period, from May to September 2013 a large public campaign was held extensively in support of Human Rights House Voronezh. 40 partner organizations of the Human Rights House Network from UK, Norway, Serbia, Croatia, Uganda, Poland, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia

sent letter of concern to the governor of Voronezh region, where we urged the authorities to extend the rent agreement.

We are happy to learn that a working group has been established on 23 August, 2013 to adopt a consolidated long-term solution to this problem. However, during the Human Rights House Foundation's visit to Voronezh in the beginning of October 2013, the situation was still not solved.

We would like to remind you of the Presidential Decree from 13 January 1996 "On some measures of state support for the human rights movement in Russia", in which public authorities in regions of the Russian Federation are directly encouraged to provide human rights organizations rent spaces on favourable terms¹. We therefore appeal to you to assist in addressing this issue, namely to

- sign a lease contract of the current premises (at the address 34, Tsyurupy street) for a longer term (15-20 years).
- provide an opportunity to rent these facilities on favourable terms available for non-commercial, socially oriented organizations, not leading any business activities.

Best wishes from



Maria Dahle
Executive Director
Human Rights House Foundation

¹ (See: <http://zakon.law7.ru/base27/part2/d27ru2518.htm>)