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Dear Sirs,

We are very much concerned by the murder of Dmitry Troyan, a civic activist defending the rights of property owners along the planned route of the Western High Speed Diameter (WHSD) expressway in St. Petersburg, Russia. Troyan was beaten by anonymous attackers and died in hospital on December 18. There are serious grounds to believe that Troyan's death is connected with his activity over the WHSD.

We have serious concerns that this awful murder will be left without proper investigation, as this has been the case with attacks on many other civic activists in Russia. As the EBRD has been considering financing for the WHSD, we call on the Bank to urge the Russian authorities to undertake a proper investigation of Troyan's death, sending requests to the Prosecutor's office and Saint-Petersburg governor. In the absence of a proper investigation the attack will be assumed to be a violent case of suppression of public activity and frightening people opposing the project. We ask the EBRD not to take any decision on the project until the investigation is finished.

For the last two years, Troyan has been fighting to get proper compensation for garage owners on the route of the WHSD and succeeded in winning several cases in court. Still, neither the project promoter nor the city authorities has eliminated the deficiencies of the project. Thousands of people would lose their property because of the expressway construction. As long as the EBRD is involved in the project, it should ensure that the Russian authorities comply with the Bank's standards and provide just compensation of proprietors along the expressway route, and respect human rights, public engagement and free expression over the project.

So far, however, the WHSD project has been absolutely closed for public. 40 thousand people have signed petitions against WHSD construction as it is going to harm human health and vulnerable nature areas such as Yuntolovsky nature reserve, the Gulf of Finland and the delta of the Neva river. Despite of the protests, official appeals and conclusion of public environmental impact assessment we did not see any evidence that the customer – JSC “ZSD” is intended to consider public opinion in any form. We regard Troyan's death and disrespect for human rights as another reason why the project should not be materialised and international financiers should step back from financing it.

Best regards,

Vera Ponomareva, “Save Yuntolovo”. Saint-Petersburg

Alexander Karpov, ECOM center of expertise. Saint-Petersburg

Georgy Psarev, “Djuny” cooperative. Saint-Petersburg

Mikhail Druzhininsky, “Save Vasilievsky island”. Saint-Petersburg

Alexander Nikitin, chairman of Environmental Rights Center “Bellona”. Saint-Petersburg

Alexander Fedorov, Center for environmental initiatives. Saint-Petersburg

Vitaly Servetnik, chairman of the council of “Nature and Youth” environmental organisation. Murmansk

Olga Senova, chairman of “Friends of the Baltic”. Saint-Petersburg

Anastasia Pljuto, “Okhtinskaya Duga”. Saint-Petersburg

Alexei Zimenko, Biodiversity conservation center. Moscow

Ivan Novikov, chairman of house council. Saint-Petersburg

Dmitry Ostryakov, Gorchakov school, deputy founder. Saint-Petersburg

Igor Babanin, environmentalist. Saint-Petersburg, Nuki pr., 12/6, ap. 118

Inna Kremen. Saint-Petersburg

Vladimir Levchenko, Doctor of Biological Sciences, ENWL moderator, member of Saint-Petersburg Union of Journalists. Saint-Petersburg

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Leonid Romankov, former chairman of the Culture Commition of Saint-Petersburg parliament

Alexander Vinnikov, “For Russia without rassism”