



U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

Press Statement

**Sean McCormack, Spokesman**

Washington, DC

April 16, 2007

## Use of Excessive Force Against Protestors in Russia

We are deeply disturbed by the excessive use of force against and detention of peaceful protestors and journalists in Moscow and St. Petersburg on April 14 and 15 by Russian law enforcement authorities. These actions raise serious concerns about Russians' ability to exercise their basic rights of freedom of assembly and speech, concerns magnified by the fact that protest organizers faced significant difficulties in their attempts to receive permits from the government to hold these peaceful demonstrations.

Peaceful marches and protests that air differing viewpoints are a cornerstone of democratic society. We have consistently raised our concerns about freedom of assembly and speech in Russia with the Russian government. We welcome the call by some Russian officials for a thorough investigation into the use of force against the protestors on April 14-15, and urge Russian authorities to respond to these requests. We also call for the Russian government to reiterate its commitment and intention to respect fully international standards involving freedom of assembly, speech, and press.

**2007/292**

Released on April 16, 2007

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.