

PC.DEL/10/15  
15 January 2015

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1031st MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 December 2014

**On the human rights situation in Sweden**

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to draw attention to the worrying information published by international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) about the human rights situation in Sweden.

In particular, NGOs such as Civil Rights Defenders, Sametinget (the Sami Parliament of Sweden), the United Nations Association of Sweden and others are raising the alarm with regard to the growing number of appeals to the Ombudsman of Sweden by Roma, Muslims, Swedes of African descent, women and also persons with physical and mental disabilities about discrimination and infringement of their rights.

According to these NGOs, Roma experience “structural discrimination and stigmatization” on the labour market, in education and on the housing market. The inclusion by the police in its database of information about 5,000 people, including children, on religious and ethnic grounds gives cause for concern, particularly as it involves not only presumptive or actual criminals.

International organizations, notably the Council of Europe and the United Nations Committee against Torture, have noted serious problems regarding the length of time that suspects are held in pre-trial detention. In the absence of clear rules regarding the length of confinement and detention in custody of suspects by order of the public prosecutor without a court decision, at least 20 people have been held in pre-trial detention for more than a year and four of them for over two and a half years. The most notorious case is 1,427 days in custody, including almost 1,000 days in punitive confinement.

The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden, Mr. Fredrik Malmberg, has expressed concern at the growing number of underage children held in remand homes, many of them in solitary cells for extended periods.

Anne Ramberg, Secretary General of the Swedish Bar Association, describes this long-term detention as “almost unique in the world and not appropriate for a State governed by the rule of law”. The NGO Amnesty International points to serious problems in Swedish legislation with regard to the criminalization of torture and cruel treatment.

The immoderate use of force by the police is a further cause for concern. Six people have been killed in the last 18 months, three of whom were suffering from mental illnesses. The situation is made worse by the fact that the investigation of such abuses is conducted by bodies answerable to the Swedish National Police Board.

It is sad to see this deterioration with regard to human rights confirmed by major international bodies in a country like Sweden that for a long time was for many people a model of democracy and respect for basic freedoms and human rights. This also once again confirms the fact that problems like this can be found in all countries in the OSCE, regardless of their “democratic track record”.

We hope that the Swedish authorities will take the necessary steps to rectify the situation and meet its OSCE commitments with regard to the rule of law, ensuring non-discrimination and safeguarding the rights of national minorities, also with the assistance of the relevant OSCE executive structures.

We would welcome it if our Swedish colleagues were to comment on the issues raised by us.