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WRITTEN REPLIES TO QUESTIONS FROM WILLIAM HORSLEY FOR THE POLITICAL ASPECTS STUDY OF THE INITIATIVE ON IMPUNITY AND THE RULE OF LAW, RECEIVED 21/4/2011

Reference material for the Working Conference on Safety and Protection of Journalists: A Responsibility for the World, on 1 June at City University London

***Highlighted in bold is passage cited in the Political Aspects Study***

-1 On the root causes for growth of a climate of impunity in Russia

**The climate of impunity in Russia is pervasive and has deep roots. Impunity protecting the killers of journalists is part of a much wider picture, reflecting a general absence of effective rule of law and widespread corruption. The climate of impunity is reinforced by systemic failures in the judicial system, which result in ineffective investigations; it also reflects the low level of understanding among the general public about the value of journalism as a public good, and the lack of solidarity among journalists themselves.**

- 2 On recent attempts within Russia to raise the level of public concern, and to secure effective judicial investigations in cases of violent crimes against journalists

The recent presentation of a new database tracking all attacks on journalists across Russia [produced by the Russian Union of Journalists and others] gained a good deal of press and public attention. Officials from the General Prosecutor's Office attended and announced the intention to cooperate more closely with journalists and other experts to counter the wave of violence against journalists. Since early 2000 President Medvedev has publicly denounced attacks on journalists as a serious crime a number of times. The case of Oleg Kashin [an investigative anti-corruption journalist who was brutally beaten in November 2010, suffering life-threatening and permanent injuries] has affected the general attitudes of many Russians, leading many to an awareness of the need for journalists to be better protected.

-3 On the impact on the Russian government of critical statements and expressions of concern from Western political leaders

Statements from the West are important, but raising awareness among the Russian population is more important still.