

PRESS RELEASE  
(for immediate release)

## Business & Human Rights Resource Centre launches its first regional briefing on Eastern Europe & Central Asia

(Kyiv and London, 9 April 2013) – Today the non-profit [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](#) is launching its first regional briefing on “Business & human rights in Eastern Europe & Central Asia – a round-up of recent developments.”

[Download the 15-page briefing here](#)

The briefing provides a reality-based snapshot of companies’ human rights impacts in the region. It highlights concerns raised by civil society, company responses to allegations of misconduct, positive initiatives by business, and developments in law, policy, lawsuits and the international business & human rights framework. Subjects in the briefing include widespread industrial pollution affecting health and causing displacement, workplace discrimination (based on gender, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation), health & safety abuses, child labour, and abuses of trade union rights. The briefing also refers to human rights lawsuits against companies in Armenia, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Russia.

The briefing’s introduction notes which companies headquartered in the region had the best and worst response rates when Business & Human Rights Resource Centre invited them to respond to human rights concerns raised by civil society. Five companies had a 100% response rate: Alaverdi Copper Smelting (headquartered in Armenia), CaspiEcology Environmental Services (Kazakhstan), Rusal (Russia), Tengizchevroil (Kazakhstan), and Ukrenergo (Ukraine). Five companies had a 0% response rate: Gazprom (Russia), GeoPro Mining (Russia), HEP (Croatia), Rosoboronexport (Russia), and TOO «Горнолыжный курорт «Көкжайлау» (Kazakhstan). The statistics also show the response rates country-by-country, with the highest response rates from companies headquartered in Bulgaria, Armenia and Kazakhstan, and the lowest response rates from companies headquartered in Ukraine and Croatia. The briefing provides a link to the full text of all company responses.

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre will be submitting the briefing to the United Nations Working Group on business & human rights, the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organization, and the International Finance Corporation. The Centre will also contact governments in the region to express its concern about those companies headquartered in their country that fail to respond to civil society when human rights concerns are raised, and to note which companies have a good response rate.

Mauricio Lazala, the Resource Centre’s Deputy Director, said:

*“This briefing provides a concise overview of key developments and trends in the business and human rights field in Eastern Europe & Central Asia over the past four years. It highlights major concerns related to companies’ operations and positive initiatives undertaken by companies.”*

Ella Skybenko, the Centre’s Eastern Europe & Central Asia Researcher based in Ukraine, commented:

*“There are many challenges in the region: serious human rights abuses by companies or with businesses’ complicity happen with alarming frequency. Lack of corporate accountability is still the norm in too many places in the region.*

*Yet there are a few positive signs in some countries, including an increased awareness among both NGOs and companies of the impact companies have on human rights. For me personally, it has been encouraging to see how some small NGOs in the region are working hard to improve the human rights performance of business. For example, on my recent research mission to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, I could see NGOs operating under difficult conditions and still doing excellent work. It is also encouraging to see that in some countries in the region, companies are beginning to respond to civil society when human rights concerns are raised.*

*Another positive sign: in June 2011, the Government of Russia was one of the core sponsors of the United Nations Human Rights Council resolution endorsing the UN Guiding Principles*

*on Business and Human Rights. Indeed Russia was one of the five core sponsors of the 2005 resolution creating the mandate of the UN Special Representative on business & human rights, and remained a core sponsor throughout that mandate.”*

**Countries:** The briefing refers to Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

**Companies** mentioned in this briefing include:

A&M Rare	Ersay Caspian Contractor	North Caspian Operating Company (NCOG)
ACM Money	ExxonMobil	OzenMunayGaz
Aeroflot	Gazprom	Provident Financial
Agip KCO	GeoPro Mining	Rosoboronexport
Alaverdi Copper Smelting Company	H&M	Rusal
Altai Broiler	HEP	Sakhalin Energy Investment Company
ArcelorMittal	IMG	Severstal
Armenia Water and Sewage	Interpipe	SIBUR
Arup	Kajaran Copper Molybdenum Plant	Slavutich
Bulfanko	Kapan Combine	Tajik Aluminum Plant
Carlsberg	Karazhanbasmunay	Telenor Group
CaspiEcology Environmental Services	KazMunayGas	Tengizchevroil
Centerra Gold	KPMG	TOO «Горнолыжный курорт «Көкжайлау»
Chastnaya Sobstvennost	LukArco	Ukrenerg
Chelopech Mining	MAL Hungarian Aluminium	UTair Aviation
Chevron	McDonalds	Vallex Company Group
Coca-Cola Beverages Ukraine	Metinvest	Zangezour Copper & Molybdenum Combine
Deno Gold Mining	Moskonversprom	Zaporizhya Aluminium Plant
Dundee Precious Metals	Mostostal	
Ecosign Mountain Resort Planners	Mykolayiv Alumina Plant	
Engineerisk	Nayirit Chemical Plant	
ENI	Nefteyugansk United Airline	

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre will issue the full briefing in Russian as well, in the coming months.

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*To discuss the briefing, please contact Ella Skybenko, Eastern Europe & Central Asia Researcher & Representative, [skybenko@business-humanrights.org](mailto:skybenko@business-humanrights.org), or Mauricio Lazala, Deputy Director, [lazala@business-humanrights.org](mailto:lazala@business-humanrights.org), tel: +44-20-7636-7774.*

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*Business & Human Rights Resource Centre tracks the human rights impacts (positive & negative) of over 5000 companies in over 180 countries. The site is updated hourly and receives 1.5 million hits per month. We seek responses from companies when concerns are raised by civil society. The response rate is over 75% globally. Advocates thank us for bringing global attention to their concerns and for eliciting responses from companies. Companies thank us for providing them the opportunity to present their responses in full. This process often leads to real improvements on the ground.*

Special portals on the Resource Centre's website include:

- [“Getting Started – an introduction to business & human rights”](#)
- [“Tools & Guidance”](#)
- [“UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights”](#)
- [“UN Working Group on business & human rights”](#)
- [“UN Special Representative on business & human rights”](#)
- [“Corporate Legal Accountability”](#)
- [“Business, Conflict & Peace”](#)
- [“Business & Children”](#)

- ["Business & Freedom of Association"](#)
- ["Human rights impacts of oil pollution: US Gulf Coast, Ecuador, Nigeria"](#)

*Mary Robinson chairs the Resource Centre's 70-member International Advisory Network. Its 23 Academic Partners include leading academic institutions in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America.*

*The Centre has 14 regional researchers:*

- *Sa'eda Al-Kilani, Middle East & North Africa Researcher, based in Jordan*
- *Lowell Chow, East Asia Researcher, based in Hong Kong*
- *Aliou Diouf, Francophone Africa Researcher, based in Senegal*
- *Rania Fazah, Middle East & Gulf Region Researcher, based in Lebanon*
- *Eniko Horvath, Europe Researcher, based in UK*
- *Harpreet Kaur, South Asia Researcher, based in India*
- *Joseph Kibugu, Eastern Africa Researcher, based in Kenya*
- *Danielle McMullan, UK, Ireland, and Israel & Palestine Researcher, based in UK*
- *Nokukhanya (Khanya) Mncwabe, Anglophone Africa Researcher, based in South Africa*
- *Julia Mello Neiva, Brazil, Portugal & Portuguese-speaking Africa Researcher, based in Brazil*
- *Gregory Regaignon, Research Director & North America Manager, based in USA*
- *Amanda Romero, Latin America & Caribbean Researcher, based in Colombia*
- *Ella Skybenko, Eastern Europe & Central Asia Researcher, based in Ukraine*
- *Bobbie Sta. Maria, Southeast Asia Researcher, based in Thailand*

*For further information about the Resource Centre, see the ["About us"](#) section of the website.*

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