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Dear Head of the Investigation Department;

I am writing to express my grave concern for the detention of Anastasia Shevchenko, a prominent human rights defender in Rostov-on-Don.

On 21 January, Anastasia Shevchenko, a Coordinator with the Otkrytaya Rossiya (Open Russia) movement- which promotes human rights, rule of law and government accountability- was arrested and accused of “repeated participation in the activities of an undesirable organization” under article 284.1 of the Russian Criminal Code. On 23 January, Rostov-on-Don’s Leninsky court rejected a bail plea and put her under house arrest pending trial.

By prosecuting Anastasia Shevchenko for the mere fact of her participation in the peaceful activities of a public association, the Russian authorities are in violation of both their obligations under international human rights law as well as the Russian Constitution which guarantees Anastasia Shevchenko’s right to freedom of expression and association.

I call on you to use your authority to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Anastasia Shevchenko from house arrest and an end to her criminal prosecution.

Yours sincerely,