

INTERNATIONAL  
**Herald Tribune**

## Hundreds rally in Moscow in memory of slain journalist Anna Politkovskaya

**The Associated Press**

Saturday, April 7, 2007

**MOSCOW:** Hundreds of demonstrators gathered Saturday in Moscow to commemorate the death of journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who was gunned down in her apartment building six months ago.

An estimated 400 people carried photographs of Politkovskaya and held banners with slogans protesting against human rights abuses committed by Russian federal forces and allied paramilitaries during years of fighting in Chechnya.

Politkovskaya, whose reports exposed such rights abuses in the North Caucasus region, was shot to death on Oct. 7. The murder sparked an international outcry and underscored the dangers in Russia for journalists who criticize the authorities or expose injustice.

Her killers have not been found, and the murder threw a spotlight as shrinking media freedom in Russia.

One protester told AP Television that said she attended such demonstrations because elections in Russia were practically meaningless.

Another man doubted whether Politkovskaya's killers would ever be found.

"Anna has gone and it is the most awful thing. You know that every time they find scapegoats while the real killers and their patrons always escape," Aleksandr Tokarev said.

Reporters Without Borders said there appeared to have been no progress in the investigation, and called for an international commission or parliamentary inquiry if authorities produced no concrete and conclusive evidence.

"The passing months must not result in any weakening in the campaign on Politkovskaya's behalf. We must continue to press for justice to be done in this case and for an end to impunity in Russia," the Paris-based journalism watchdog said in a statement.


Since taking office more than six years ago, President Vladimir Putin has presided over what critics say is a steady rollback of media freedoms won since the Soviet collapse. Top independent television stations have been shut down and print media have also experienced growing official pressure.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists said in January that 13 Russian journalists have been murdered in contract-style killings since 2006, making Russia the third deadliest country for journalists after Iraq and Algeria over the past 15 years.


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