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Attention to Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, ICAO Council President

Copy to: - Dr. Fang Liu, ICAO Secretary General & to Evaluation and Internal Audit Office (EAO)

- Mr. Luis Fonseca De Almeida, Regional Director of ICAO European and North Atlantic Office

Subject: Excessive violations of ICAO standards and legal rights of pilots in the Russian Federation!

Mr. Council President of ICAO,

This petition is addressed to you by a significant number of civil aviation personnel of the Russian Federation to have you kind attention to the real situation in the Russian aviation realm, and to exert an influence on the situation stated below! It is signed by the pilots and aviation staff who have been facing an excessive violations of their legal rights and an illogical actions of the Russian aviation authority, and also by those ones who clearly understand that the aviation personnel initial training system in the Russian Federation does not meet modern safety requirements and the ICAO standards.

In the Russian Federation, a member of ICAO, measures taken by the Federal Air Transport Agency (FATA) under Alexander Neradko's control have led to the fact that almost a quarter of all pilots who started their career in the aviation absolutely legally might lose their jobs, as well as local airlines will take a huge losses.

Thousands of aviation professionals, including former military pilots, navigators, flight engineers and private pilots, were retrained for commercial piloting in private aviation training centers which were, in its turn, authorized by the FATA of the Russian Federation after the adoption of the Federal Aviation Regulations No. 147 dated on September 12, 2008 (FAR No. 147)). The private aviation training centers obtained all the essential Certificates, and their training programs were approved by the FATA. Private and commercial pilot licenses obtained by trainees of such training centers fully met the requirements of FAR No. 147, provisions of the ICAO Annex 1 and the worldwide practice. Training programs of these aviation training centers were equal to the programs of FAA and EASA flight schools, as well as to the ICAO standards and recommendations on theoretical and flight training.

Such professionals were in demand on the labor market of Russia for quite a long time. But after the crash of the Tatarstan Air Boeing 737-500 in Kazan in 2013, the Federal Air Transport Agency trying to cover their own faults started to provide a punitive policy by canceling pilot licenses, sometimes without giving any explanations or using imperfections of the air legislation when the same case is interpreted differently in various laws regulating the aviation industry and regulations of the Russian Federation. Licenses of hundreds of aviation professionals, which were obtained according to the legislation effective at the time, were already canceled.. Next 1000 pilot licenses are to be canceled shortly. When the victims attempt to challenge such illegal actions, prosecution agencies and courts take the FATA's side in most of the cases appealing to regulations that are no longer valid.

It is fair to admit that there were also dishonest aviation training centers which violated the programs of pilot theoretical and flight training, held expired certificates giving the right to conduct professional activities, failed to meet flight training requirements. Some pilots who completed training in such centers have also obtained licenses of private and commercial pilots issued by FATA itself. We believe that it was shortcomings of the aviation authorities and the FATA that caused the appearance of disreputable aviation training centers and led them to conduct their activities for a long period of time.

Although until later, there were many aviation training centers in Russia conducting training in accordance with the approved training programs, the graduates of such centers received legal private and commercial pilot licenses which gave them a right to get a job in Russian airlines.

Despite that FAR No. 147 have come into force, and the provisions of these regulations fully conform to the Annex 1 and clearly set qualifying standards of the aviation professional certificate, the aviation authorities started interpreting them wrong and, moreover, regardless of a situation, began requiring aviation personnel to have professional aviation education acquired only in public educational institutions within the civil aviation system of the Russian Federation.

To satisfy the requirements of professional education, pilots who obtained licenses from private aviation training centers were entering public higher education institutions in Saint Petersburg and Ulyanovsk on a paid basis to receive education and eliminate all questions regarding the legitimacy of working as pilots in Russian airlines.

Today, we have the situation when FATA informed their regional offices that even if pilots received the higher professional education, but have their initial aviation training completed not in public educational institutions, but in private aviation training centers, their licenses are to be withdrawn, and they cannot obtain the new ones. The higher education received by such pilots should be considered no longer legitimate. It will concern a quarter of all the pilots in Russia at least, we would lose our jobs and many years of work and funds we invested in our education.

According to the FATA, only a graduate of a public educational institution of civil aviation meets all the demands of the initial aviation training and the criteria of professional education. As the result, a quarter of the country pilots who have undergone training and received education legally are seriously oppressed.

As a matter of fact, public educational institutions within the civil aviation system of the Russian Federation fail to meet the requirements advanced by both the air legislation of the Russian Federation and the ICAO standards.

Pilot training in the public educational institutions and specialized schools is provided with violation of FAR No. 147, because during the education students do not fly the necessary hours as PIC (without an instructor on board), do not conduct solo flights of needed length with the required number of transit landings, as it is internationally required for gaining a commercial pilot qualification. Besides, the commercial pilot training is provided without issuance of a private pilot license, which violates the requirements of FAR No. 147. Student pilots are trained upon a flying training program to obtain a commercial pilot license on planes indented to be aviated by a single pilot, and after that they are qualified as a "Co-pilot Diamond DA42", although in the rest of the world a holder of a commercial pilot license is considered a full-fledged Captain licensed to carry out commercial operations.

Moreover, professional education with a degree in "Flight Operations of Civil Aircraft" received in a public educational institution of civil aviation must be recognized as illegitimate, because the Federal State Educational Standard which is to specify the requirements and program of receiving such education has not come into force (Order of Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation No. 83 dated on January 24, 2011 "On approval and putting into execution of the Federal State Educational Standard of higher professional education concerning the training program (specialty) 162001 "Flight Operations and Air Traffic Control" (qualification (degree) "specialist")*. However, all the diplomas of university and college level education that are being issued at the moment are based on this standard, and therefore issued illegally.

The facts stated above mean that the training of specialists in public educational institutions of civil aviation does not meet both the requirements of FAR No. 147 and the ICAO Annex 1, contradict claims of acquiring professional education in the Russian Federation. In terms of the ICAO standards, the graduates of public educational institutions within the civil aviation system of the Russian Federation have not undergone the necessary training and should not have the right to fly an aircraft.

Thus, in Russia we have a situation when pilot training provided in private training centers in conformity with the standards described in the ICAO Annex 1 and requirements of Russian FAR No. 147 is illegitimate from the standpoint of the authorities. Training in public institutions within the civil aviation system of the Russian Federation is not implemented in full, provided with violation of the Russian legislation and does not meet the ICAO requirements. This, in general, has an adverse effect on the quality of flight personnel and safety.

There are other discriminating factors for absolutely all the pilots in Russia, such as:

- Russian airlines employ foreign professionals with commercial or airline transport pilot licenses, but without public professional education, because according to the international practices, in most of the countries, it is not obligatory for pilots to have a college or university degree. This raises the question, why a foreign pilot who has undergone training in a flight training school can work in Russia without having a so-called professional education, but a Russian pilot who has undergone training in an aviation training center in Russia or in an

international flight school and obtained Russian professional education afterwards, can't do that?

- Orders issued by FATA in accordance with the Russian legislation should not have retroactive force. In fact, every new order conflicts with the previous one, and, moreover, be applied regardless of a limitation period. Rules that used to be absolutely legitimate yesterday become completely illegitimate today.
- The Russian aviation authorities either do not validate the FAA, EASA pilot licenses or the ones of other ICAO members or validate them with gross violations. They also do not accept pilot training programs of American and European flight schools and oblige foreign aviation training centers where Russian pilots are trained and retrained to achieve certification according to the requirements of the Russian laws and regulations.
- FATA knowingly delay a submission of official verification letters, or refuses to submit them, or provide false information about licenses of Russian aviation professionals for aviation authorities and airlines of foreign countries. Often such official verification letters are being sent in Russian language only that makes it impossible for understanding in the rest of the world. Thus, FATA publicly violates the international ICAO standards just to prevent outflow from Russia the aviation personnel who is satisfied for employment by foreign airlines, or for validation of Russian licenses by aviation authorities in the other countries.

Based on the above, it is absolutely clear that the actions of the Russian aviation authorities are not structured and constructive; they are not aimed at improving organization and control of aviation professionals training. FATA administration does not quite understand in which direction the worldwide aviation industry is moving – in order to ensure air traffic safety, they should not fight against pilots, but create for them a modern training and career development system based on both public educational institutions and private aviation training centers competing with each other. In view of Flight Training and Standards Departments of many airlines, today the qualification of pilots in public educational institutions is frankly weak, and the pilot training in private aviation training centers has ceased to exist at all.

The Russian aviation authorities have failed to organize and supervise the quality of aviation personnel training in accordance with the Annex 1 to Chicago Convention of ICAO. The laws and regulations that were supposed to be adopted considering the ICAO standards and recommendations often contradict one another keeping options for illegal and illogical decisions.

We kindly ask you to consider the facts set out above in this petition, govern the current situation and oblige FATA and Russia as an ICAO member to:

- make FATA stop abusing aviation professionals and training centers;
- conduct an independent audit of the Russian legislation within the aviation realm and make recommendations to bring it in line with the ICAO documents within a strict deadline;
- conduct an independent audit of FATA regarding the organization of initial training and pilot licensing involving foreign aviation professionals to check compliance with the ICAO standards in the area of training, supporting and mastering skills of aviation personnel.
- undertake steps towards protection of the flight personnel who suffered from the FATA illegal actions, have FATA obliged to return their pilot licenses back.

Let us assure you that there could be many more people who signed this letter, if they were not afraid of being persecuted by the FATA and other controlling and law enforcement agencies for their civic and professional position.

With respect and hope for a change for the better.

We, the undersigned: see all the signatures on www.avaaz.org.

* According to the information on the Russian legal recourse "Garant" www.garant.ru.