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COUNTRY CONDITIONS EXPERT & INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SCHOLAR-PRACTITIONER

Russian Legal System | Political Persecution | Strategic Litigation | Authoritarian Legal Mechanisms

Distinguished human rights lawyer and academic with over 20 years of experience litigating before the Russian Supreme and Constitutional Courts, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), and United Nations bodies. Combines elite academic credentials (Ph.D., Cambridge; Fulbright Scholar, Harvard) with decades of frontline practice in Russia. Possesses deep, specialized expertise in the Russian state's suppression of civil society, the weaponization of the judicial system, "Foreign Agent" legislation, and the persecution of political dissidents, anti-war activists, and marginalized groups.

EXPERT WITNESS & ADVISORY EXPERIENCE

Country Conditions Expert Witness | U.S. Immigration Courts | 2024 – Present Retained by leading U.S. law firms (including Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Duane Morris LLP, Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP) to provide expert analysis in high-stakes political asylum and withholding of removal cases.

- Expert Reports & Testimony: Draft bespoke, comprehensive Country Condition Reports and provide oral testimony before U.S. Immigration Judges regarding the current degradation of the rule of law in the Russian Federation.
- Areas of Expertise: Provide authoritative analysis on the application of "Foreign Agent" and "Undesirable Organization" laws, persecution for anti-war speech, risks related to military mobilization and defection, state-sponsored persecution of LGBTQ+ individuals, and the impossibility of a fair trial for targeted demographics in Russia.
- Extradition Analysis: Advise on cross-border extradition risks and international human rights frameworks, including the application of ECHR obligations (non-refoulement) in post-Soviet jurisdictions.

LEGAL, ACADEMIC & NGO LEADERSHIP

Visiting Scholar | Paris Nanterre University, France | 2023 – 2025 Hosted as a Scholar-at-Risk through the Institute of International Education (IIE-SRF) and French PAUSE fellowships following forced exile from Russia.

- Delivered lectures on contemporary issues in Russian and international human rights law to graduate-level students and faculty.
- Provided expert analysis and produced scholarly work on the evolving state of the rule of law, institutional autonomy, and political persecution in the post-Soviet region.

Founder & Executive Director | Strategic Litigation Center / URFAQ | 2018 –

Present

Founded and direct an international NGO providing elite-level training on strategic human rights litigation to legal professionals across Eurasia.

- Political Prisoner Advocacy: Actively lead ongoing campaigns supporting imprisoned human rights attorneys and activists in Russia, publishing case updates to maintain international pressure and mobilize support for their families.
- Strategic Litigation: Spearheaded multi-year, high-impact litigation campaigns, including successfully challenging the lack of conjugal visits for life prisoners in Russia to establish legal precedents protecting the rights of all incarcerated individuals.
- Legal Capacity Building: Designed and delivered a comprehensive curriculum on international (ECHR, UN) and domestic human rights mechanisms, successfully training over 800 attorneys. Alumni have subsequently filed over 200 cases with the ECHR and UN Human Rights Council alleging state violations.
- Academic Partnerships: Orchestrated a formal academic partnership with the University of Arizona, integrating the center's human rights courses into their M.A. in Human Rights Practice curriculum.

Elected Deputy | Lomonosovsky Municipal District Council, Moscow, Russia | 2017 – 2022

Served a five-year elected term as a municipal deputy in Moscow, overseeing local governance matters and constituent representation within the Russian municipal system.

Chair, Center of European Law | University of Humanities, Russia | 2009 – 2022

Served as the administrative and academic head of the university's European Law Center.

- Clinical Supervision: Established and directed a human rights law clinic. Mentored law students in practical litigation, legal research, and client advocacy within the Russian judicial system.
- Curriculum Development: Designed, managed, and taught the curriculum for a new LL.M. program focused on the practical domestic application of international human rights law.

Director (Chief of Party) | Management Systems International (MSI) | 2011 – 2013

Directed a multi-million-dollar USAID-funded civil society and human rights program in Russia.

- Oversaw the distribution and compliance of 80 sub-grants to 48 local NGOs across 20 Russian regions.
- Created and nurtured a nationwide network of human rights defenders, facilitating knowledge exchange and operational resilience strategies for civil society organizations operating in an increasingly hostile legal environment.

Deputy Director & Senior Staff Attorney | NGO Human Rights Resource Center “Sutyajnik” | 2001–2011, 2013–2019

Co-led a prominent Russian human rights resource center, acting as primary litigator, researcher, and international liaison.

- Strategic Litigation: Directed the organization's litigation efforts, resulting in multiple landmark victories before the European Court of Human Rights and the Russian Supreme and Constitutional Courts.
- Authoritarian Legal Defense: Safely navigated the organization through severe government crackdowns. The NGO was ultimately liquidated by the Russian government under the "Foreign Agent" law, providing firsthand experience with the state's mechanisms of legal repression.
- International Shadow Reporting: Partnered extensively with international law clinics (including Loyola Law School and UQAM) to produce collaborative shadow reports for the UN Human Rights Council and Special Rapporteurs (e.g., exposing Russian state organ harvesting practices).

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Law (International Human Rights Law), Cambridge University, UK
- Candidate of Sciences in Law (Ph.D. equivalent), Tiumen State University, Russia
- LL.M. (International Human Rights Law), Essex University, UK
- Law Degree (J.D. equivalent), Urals State Law Academy, Russia

FELLOWSHIPS & BOARD AFFILIATIONS

- Institute of International Education (IIE-SRF) Scholar Rescue Fund Fellow (2023–2025)
- Fulbright Fellow, Harvard Law School (2020)
- Galina Starovoitova Research Fellow, Kennan Institute, Woodrow Wilson Center (2014)
- Reagan-Fascell Democracy Research Fellow, National Endowment for Democracy (2010)
- PILNet Fellow, Columbia University (2001–2002)
- Emeritus Board Member: European Prison Litigation Network (EPLN)
- Member, International Advisory Board: M.A. in Human Rights Practice, University of Arizona

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Books & Edited Volumes

- Burkov, Anton, and Todd Brower, eds. Strategic Litigation of Public Interest Cases: US and Russian Best Practice. Moscow, 2020.
- Burkov, Anton, ed. How To Bring International Human Rights Home: Strategic Litigation at National and International Courts. Moscow, 2018.
- Burkov, Anton. The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights in Russian Courts. Moscow: Wolters Kluwer, 2010.

Book Chapters & Journal Articles

- Burkov, Anton. "The Use of European Human Rights Law in Russian Courts." In *Russia and the European Court of Human Rights: The Strasbourg Effect*, edited by Lauri Mälksoo and Wolfgang Benedek. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Burkov, Anton. "How to Improve the Results of a Reluctant Player: the Case of Russia and the European Convention of Human Rights." In *The European Court of Human Rights And its Discontents*, edited by S. Flogaitis, T. Zwart, and J. Fraser. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2013.
- Burkov, Anton. "Motivation for Direct Application of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in Russian Courts." *Baltic Yearbook of International Law* 12 (2012): 229-247.