

policy, reflecting the consolidation of power by former security and military officers. Russia's constitutional court struck down key provisions of the law that banned journalists from making positive or negative observations about candidates or parties.

2006 October 7—Anna Politkovskaya, a journalist who exposed the corruption of the Russian army and its conduct in Chechnya, was shot and killed in the lobby of her apartment.

2006—Alexander Litvinenko is poisoned. Litvinenko was a former officer of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and KGB, who fled from court prosecution in Russia and received political asylum in the United Kingdom.

2008—Russia wages a war against Georgia. Today, thousands of Russian troops occupy Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region, which constitutes about 20% of Georgia's internationally recognized territory. Russia has never fulfilled its obligations under the Six-Point Cease-Fire Agreement (also known as the Sarkozy Plan) that ended the fighting.

2010: Polish Air Force Tu-154 Crash over Smolensk, Russia. Antoni Macierewicz (Poland's defense minister) claims the fatal crash which killed Poland's President Lech Kaczynski, the First Lady and 94 others in 2010 in Russia was preceded by two explosions on board. A previous Polish government concluded that pilot error was to blame for the crash, but Law and Justice ordered a new investigation which concluded this year that the plane was brought down by explosions on board. No international analysis was allowed by Russia.

2013—Putin signs law banning gay publications. "It officially declares that gays and lesbians are inferior beings," says Elena Klimova, a gay rights activist in Russia who was convicted under the law in 2014.

2014—Putin illegally invades Ukraine. More than 10,000 have been killed, and millions of Ukrainians have been displaced.

2014—Russia occupies Crimean Peninsula and nearly ten thousand Crimean Tatars are displaced from their homes. Russia under the Putin regime has violated UN human rights, and infringements of the Geneva Convention.

2014—Russian forces shoot down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over occupied Ukrainian territory, killing 298 innocent passengers. Russia attempts to use disinformation and propaganda to cover up obfuscate the truth of its brutality.

2014—Human rights abuses in Russia are more prevalent than ever. The LGBTQ+ community is targeted. Independent media report that 31 civilians were killed in the first nine months of 2014. Abduction-style detentions, torture, and enforced disappearances persisted in the North Caucasus, as did attacks against government critics, the report says, adding that the situation is particularly bad in Dagestan.

2014—Oleg Sentsov, Ukrainian filmmaker, is arrested under charges of running "terrorist organizations" in Crimea.

2015—Natalya Sharina, the director of the Ukrainian Literature Library in Moscow, was put under house arrest in 2015 under the charges of inciting ethnic hatred and spreading "anti-Russian propaganda."

2015—Journalist Boris Nemstov is shot and killed. Nemstov was planning on leading a rally to protest the war in Ukraine days before his killing.

2016—Russian authorities arrested Roman Sushchenko, a Ukrainian journalist with the state news service, Ukrinform, on dubious espionage charges.

2016—Russia attacks U.S. election. Wisconsin, Ohio, California and 10 other states said they were among 21 states that Russian government hackers targeted in an effort to sway the 2016 presidential election in favor

of Donald Trump though no votes were changed.

Federal and congressional intelligence groups that have stated that Russia interfered in the election: CIA, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, FBI, NSA, Justice Department, House Intelligence Committee, Senate Intelligence Committee.

2017: In December, the Central Election Commission banned opposition leader Aleksey Navalny from challenging Putin in the 2018 presidential election, removing from the contest the only credible opposition to have announced a campaign.

2017—Russian authorities banned the activities of the Jehovah's Witnesses, which was deemed an extremist group.

2017: Investigative journalist and Novy Peterburg cofounder Nikolay Andrushchenko died in April, weeks after he was severely beaten, and Dmitriy Popkov, editor of the investigative online outlet Ton-M, was shot to death in May.

2017—Workers on stadiums built for the 2017 FIFA Confederations Cup and 2018 World Cup reported exploitation, including non-provision of contracts, non-payment of wages, and retaliation for reporting abuses. The Building and Woodworkers International trade union reported at least 17 deaths on stadiums since construction began.

2017—By February 2017, the number of people imprisoned for extremist speech spiked to 94, from 54 in 2015.

2017—In the first six months of 2017 alone, the number of people administratively punished by Russian authorities for supposedly violating the country's regulations on public gatherings was two-and-a-half times higher than throughout 2016.

2017—Denis Voronenkov, a onetime Communist member of Russia's lower house of parliament, dies after being shot outside a hotel in Kyiv. President Poroshenko calls the shooting a "Russian state terrorist act." Voronenkov, who fled to Ukraine in 2016, is the latest in a string of Putin and Russia's critics who were killed or injured under mysterious circumstances.

2017—Russia interferes in the French election between opponents Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen. The Macron presidential campaign accused the Kremlin of election meddling, saying that servers belonging to the team were hacked by a group likely to be associated with Russia.

2018—Father and daughter Sergei and Yulia Skripal are poisoned. British foreign secretary Boris Johnson said on 16 March that it was "overwhelmingly likely" that the poisoning had been ordered directly by Russian president Putin, which marked the first time the British government accused Vladimir Putin of personally ordering the poisoning.

2018: Donald Trump accepts Putin's lies on Russian interference in U.S. elections over statement from U.S. Intelligence Community: "My people came to me, Dan Coats came to me and some others, they think it's Russia. I have President Putin, he just said it's not Russia. I will say this; I don't see any reason why it would be. I have great confidence in my intelligence people, but I will tell you that President Putin was extremely strong and powerful in his denial today." —Trump, Helsinki Conference 2018

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I urge our President to see Putin for what he is: an enemy of liberty, not a competitor.

#### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, human trafficking hurts women and children all around the world. Sadly, the United States is no exception.

As many as 300,000 American children are at risk of child sexual exploitation. It is happening in every community around the country. Every weekend in Minnesota, as many as 45 Minnesota girls are sold for sex.

But there is good news. The Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act, a new law which was passed with bipartisan support earlier this year to crack down on websites that facilitate trafficking, is making a difference. Backpage.com, the single largest online source of sex trafficking has now been shut down by Federal law enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, July 30 marks World Day against Trafficking in Persons. It is another opportunity to raise awareness and also redouble our efforts in the fight against traffickers and helping victims.

#### UPHOLD OUR COMMITMENT TO NATO ALLIANCE

(Mr. CORREA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to discuss the importance of NATO to our Nation and to Europe.

In 1949, the United States and 11 other countries created NATO. Today, 29 countries make up this alliance.

At the heart of NATO is article 5, which says that an attack on one ally is attack on all allies.

On September 12, 2001, for the first time ever, article 5 was invoked. 9/11, an attack on America, was an attack on all.

Most recently, the country of Montenegro joined the NATO Alliance. And last week, sadly, the President expressed doubt that the U.S. should come to Montenegro's defense. This is disturbing.

The only time article 5 has been invoked has been for America. When our Nation was at its most vulnerable point, NATO stepped up and had our back. We must uphold our commitment to this critical alliance.

#### PERMANENTLY REPEAL MEDICAL DEVICE EXCISE TAX

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 184, the Protect Medical Innovation Act.

Many medical device manufacturers in North Carolina's Fifth District have reported how the medical device excise tax hinders medical innovation, costs jobs, decreases research and development, and slows capital expansion.

A fundamentally flawed policy enacted under ObamaCare, the medical