

Sen. Roger F. Wicker, *Mississippi*
Chairman

Rep. Christopher H. Smith, *New Jersey*
Co-Chairman



June 15, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We hope you will call on Russian President Vladimir Putin immediately and unconditionally to release the Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov from his unjust imprisonment in Siberia. In light of Sentsov's hunger strike, our request is urgent.

Oleg Sentsov has been a prisoner of conscience in Russia for more than four years. In May 2014, he was detained in his native Crimea, then illegally occupied by Russia, and brought to Moscow on unsubstantiated allegations of terrorism. Numerous governments and human rights organizations have dismissed these allegations as politically-charged, groundless fabrications orchestrated in retaliation for Sentsov's outspoken criticism of Russia's occupation of Crimea and his efforts to document human rights abuses there.

On May 14, 2018, Mr. Sentsov declared he had begun an indefinite hunger strike, stating that "the one and only condition for its termination is the release of all Ukrainian political prisoners that are currently present on the territory of the Russian Federation." With his health already weakened, it is uncertain how long he can survive.

As Russia hosts the World Cup in the coming weeks, the eyes of the world will be on the country. In the spirit of this unifying global event, we urge you to raise with President Putin the international approbation which Oleg Sentsov's immediate release would provide for him. Your advocacy on behalf of this brave Ukrainian patriot will be an important demonstration of U.S. human rights leadership around the world.

Sincerely,

Senator Roger F. Wicker

Senator Benjamin L. Cardin