

Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin, *Maryland*  
Chairman



Rep. Steve Cohen, *Tennessee*  
Co-Chairman

July 22, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

Vladimir Putin has been involved in the systematic persecution and destruction of anyone opposing his tyrannical regime's brutal policies at home and abroad. Russian patriot Vladimir Kara-Murza is the most recent high-profile victim of the totalitarian law enforcement practices now common in Russia. Mr. Kara-Murza is a journalist and opposition politician who has been a fierce critic of Vladimir Putin and has worked tirelessly towards a free Russia. He was arrested in Russia on April 12, 2022, on charges of disobeying police orders when he allegedly "changed the trajectory of his movement" upon seeing Russian police officers at his home. This carried a 15-day sentence in jail. With five days remaining in his sentence, new charges were levied against him for spreading "deliberately false information" about Russia's war on Ukraine and he now faces up to 15 years in prison for simply being an independent voice in Putin's Russia.

This is not the first time Putin's regime has tried to silence Mr. Kara-Murza. He has been poisoned twice, in 2015 and 2017, and barely survived the second attempt on his life. Given the Kremlin's targeting of Mr. Kara-Murza, his arrest, and now trumped-up charges, by any definition, Vladimir Kara-Murza is a political prisoner.

The United States has a proud history of standing up for political prisoners and working relentlessly to help them return to freedom. We stared down the Soviet Union, Communist China, military regimes in Latin America and South-East Asia, and succeeded in helping secure the release of those who deserved freedom the most – innocent and peaceful activists and freedom fighters representing a vision for better governments in those countries. Mr. Kara-Murza represents a hope for a democratic Russia at peace with its neighbors and own citizens, and now is someone who the U.S. should advocate for his release.

Mr. Kara-Murza's mentor and Russian opposition leader, Boris Nemtsov, was murdered a few feet away from the Kremlin wall. We cannot allow Putin's regime to do the same to Mr. Kara-Murza. A lengthy prison term for someone who has survived two assassination attempts is as good as a death sentence.

The Helsinki Commission continues to raise the issue of political prisoners in Russia, Belarus, and other countries across the OSCE region, and specifically Vladimir Kara-Murza's case. Resolutions have been introduced in Congress to which Commission leaders have joined and we along with other Members of Congress wrote to you in May urging you to "name and sanction every Russian official and associate involved with the false arrest, detention, and political persecution of Vladimir Kara-Murza." Now, we call on your Administration to use every instrument in our toolbox to secure the release of Mr. Kara-Murza. This is in the interest of our national security, his well-being, and importantly, the well-being of his incredibly brave children and spouse. Mrs. Kara-Murza and their three children reside in the U.S and despite the distance, the Kremlin has been poisoning – literally and figuratively – their lives for decades now. We should do everything in our power to help free Vladimir Kara-Murza and reunite him with his family.

Sincerely,



Ben Cardin  
Chairman



Steve Cohen  
Co-Chairman  
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly  
Special Representative on Political  
Prisoners



Roger F. Wicker  
Senate Ranking Member



Joe Wilson  
House Ranking Member