



# **PUTIN'S WAR ON TRUTH**

## **Propaganda and Censorship in Russia**

### **Witness Biographies**

**Fatima Tlis**  
**Journalist, Voice of America (VOA)**

Fatima Tlis helped found the VOA fact-checking and anti-disinformation site Polygraph.info. Polygraph launched in 2017 with a focus on Russia, though the site now covers China and oppressive regimes in other parts of Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Mideast. Tlis, an ethnic Circassian, previously was chief editor of the Russian news agency Regnum and reported for the Associated Press on the turbulent situation in her home region of the North Caucasus. In 2007, the United States granted her asylum after a series of threats and attacks on her by Russian security services.

*Tlis is testifying in an unofficial capacity.*

**Peter Pomerantsev**  
**Senior Fellow and Co-Director of the Arena Initiative, SNF Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University**

Between 2017- 2020, Peter Pomerantsev was a Senior Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science where he was the director of the Arena Initiative, a research project dedicated to overcoming the challenges of digital era disinformation and polarisation. His book on Russian propaganda *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible* won the 2016 Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize and was nominated for the Samuel Johnson, Guardian First Book, Pushkin House and Gordon Burns Prizes. It is translated into over a dozen languages and was dramatized on BBC Radio 4. His new book *This is Not Propaganda* was released in August 2019 and has been shortlisted for the Gordon Burns Prize and was a Times Book of the Year.

Pomerantsev has testified on the challenges of information war and media development to the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the UK Parliament Defense Select Committee. He was a specialist advisor on the 'UK Parliamentary Committee on Fake News' and a member of USC Annenberg's 'Transatlantic Working Group on Internet Content Moderation and Freedom of Expression.' He is a columnist at the American

Interest, and writes for publications including the New York Times, Granta, and The Atlantic. Between 2002 and 2014 he was a television producer on documentaries and factual entertainment programs for major networks including the Discovery Channel and the BBC. He continues to present and write radio documentaries for the BBC Radio 4, most recently on disinformation about climate change.

Pomerantsev is frequently asked to host policy seminars at NATO, the EU, the UK FCO, the German Foreign Office, and the U.S. State Department—as well as numerous public events. He has helped write in-depth policy recommendations on counter-propaganda and media diversity for both national governments and NGOs, including the UK Foreign Office’s Strategic Communication policies for Russia and the Western Balkans. He has given seminars and talks on propaganda and media at universities including Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Columbia, and Princeton. He has been a fellow of the Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna.

### **Vladimir Kara-Murza**

#### **Russian Journalist and Author; Former Host, Echo of Moscow Radio**

Vladimir Kara-Murza is a Russian politician, author, and historian. A longtime colleague of opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, he was a candidate for the Russian Parliament and served as deputy leader of the People’s Freedom Party. Leading diplomatic efforts on behalf of the opposition, Kara-Murza played a key role in the adoption of targeted Magnitsky sanctions on Russian human rights violators in the United States, European Union, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia. U.S. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) called him “one of the most passionate and effective advocates for passage of the Magnitsky Act”; U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) described him as “a courageous advocate for the democratic process and fundamental universal human rights.” Twice, in 2015 and 2017, Kara-Murza was poisoned and left in a coma; a subsequent media investigation by Bellingcat, The Insider, and Der Spiegel identified officers of Russia’s Federal Security Service behind the poisonings.

Kara-Murza is a contributing writer at the Washington Post and hosted a weekly show on Echo of Moscow radio until its closure by Russian authorities in March 2022. He previously worked for the BBC, RTVi, Kommersant, and other media outlets. Kara-Murza has directed three documentary films: *They Chose Freedom*, *Nemtsov*, and *My Duty to Not Stay Silent*. He authored the book *Reform or Revolution: The Quest for Responsible Government in the First Russian State Duma* and contributed to several volumes, including *Russian Liberalism: Ideas and People*, *Europe Whole and Free: Vision and Reality*, and *Boris Nemtsov and Russian Politics: Power and Resistance*.

Kara-Murza led successful international efforts to commemorate Nemtsov, including with street designations in Washington and Vilnius. He was the founding chairman of the Nemtsov Foundation and served as vice president at Open Russia and the Free Russia Foundation; both organizations were designated as “undesirable” by Vladimir Putin’s government. In March 2022 he joined with other public intellectuals and political and cultural figures to establish the Russian Antiwar Committee opposing Putin’s attack on Ukraine. Kara-Murza is a senior advisor at Human Rights First and a senior fellow at the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights; he

has also been a visiting fellow at the University of Chicago, leading a seminar course on contemporary Russia. He has been profiled on CBS 60 Minutes and NBC Nightly News, and has appeared on CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, and BBC Newsnight. Kara-Murza is a recipient of several awards, including the Sakharov Prize for Journalism as an Act of Conscience, the Magnitsky Human Rights Award, and the Geneva Summit Courage Award. He holds an M.A. (Cantab.) in History from Cambridge. He is married, with three children.