

URGENT ACTION

IMPRISONED POLITICAL ACTIVIST HOSPITALIZED

On 4 July 2024, Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian political activist and journalist was hospitalized while serving a 25-year sentence in a strict regime penal colony IK-6 in Omsk, Western Siberia. Vladimir Kara-Murza has been diagnosed with polyneuropathy, which can lead to paralysis of the legs. Since his incarceration, he has been repeatedly subjected to arbitrary disciplinary punishments and other ill-treatment. Vladimir Kara-Murza is a prisoner of conscience, persecuted solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression. His release is especially urgent due to his deteriorating health condition.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Gostev Arkady Aleksandrovich
Director of the Federal Penitentiary Service
Zhitnaya st., 14, GSP-1
Moscow
119991
Russian Federation

Dear Mr. Gostev,

I am writing to you to express my deep concern about the life and health of Vladimir Kara-Murza, sentenced to 25 years imprisonment on trumped-up charges. Since his incarceration in IK-6 in Omsk, Vladimir Kara-Murza, who suffers from polyneuropathy, which can lead to paralysis of the legs, has been repeatedly arbitrarily placed in punishment cells and subjected to other ill-treatment by the penal authorities. In January, he was unfairly placed in the EPKT for 4 months and in June in the PKT for a further 6 months by the administration of Penal Colony No. 6 in the Omsk region.

On 4 July, it became known that he had been hospitalized. His lawyers were denied access to him for six days after his hospitalization under various pretexts.

Polyneuropathy is included in the list of diseases that give grounds for an early release on health grounds.

Vladimir Kara-Murza is a prisoner of conscience. He must be released immediately and unconditionally, all charges against him must be dropped.

I am calling on you to immediately and unconditionally release Vladimir Kara-Murza. While he is still incarcerated, I urge you to ensure that he is not subjected to arbitrary punishment and is provided with adequate health care.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Vladimir Kara-Murza is a prominent Russian political activist and journalist. He was a close associate of prominent opposition leader Boris Nemtsov and cooperated with former prisoner of conscience Mikhail Khodorkovsky and other political opposition groups, human rights NGOs and independent media. He is known for campaigning in support of the "Magnitsky list" and other targeted sanctions against people suspected of human rights abuses in Russia.

Vladimir Kara-Murza is a son of the late, well-known independent journalist Vladimir Alekseevich Kara-Murza. He has wife Evgenia Kara-Murza, who occasionally represents him in public while he is imprisoned. Her Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ekaramurza>

Vladimir Kara-Murza survived two poisoning attempts, in 2015 and 2017. According to the investigative collective Bellingcat, prior to these poisonings he had been followed by the same Federal Security Service (FSB) unit that would later poison Aleksei Navalny. There has been no investigation by the Russian authorities into either poisoning. The poisonings failed to kill him, but they damaged Kara-Murza's health. While in detention, his condition further deteriorated leading to the development of polyneuropathy in both feet, according to his lawyers.

Vladimir Kara-Murza has been in detention since April 2022 because of his anti-war views and campaigning for human rights in Russia. On 17 April 2023, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison on charges of "high treason" (Article 275 of the Criminal Code), "disseminating knowingly false information about the Russian Armed Forces" (Article 207.3(2)) and "participating in activities of an undesirable organization" (Article 284.1(1)). The basis for the accusations were his speeches in which he criticized Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and his participation in opposition political group "Open Russia".

Vladimir Kara-Murza serves his sentence in Strict Regime Penal Colony No. 6 near Omsk (Western Siberia). While in detention, he has been repeatedly subjected to arbitrary disciplinary punishments and other ill-treatment, including multiple placements in SHIZO (penalty isolation cell). Between January and May 2024, he was held in EPKT (so-called single cell-type room).

On 19 June, Vladimir Kara-Murza was again placed in a PKT (cell-type room) for the maximum possible period of 6 months.

Prolonged solitary confinement is defined by the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners as a period of 15 days or more in conditions lacking meaningful human contact for at least 22 hours a day. Prolonged solitary confinement constitutes a violation of the prohibition of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

On 4 July 2024 Vladimir Kara-Murza was hospitalized in the prison hospital. His lawyers were allowed to visit Vladimir Kara-Murza only six days after hospitalization. According to the lawyer, Vladimir's health condition is "relatively stable" and the reason for hospitalization was a medical examination, the reasons for which are unknown.

Vladimir Kara-Murza has serious health problems: after surviving two poisoning attempts, he was diagnosed with polyneuropathy, which can lead to paralysis of the legs. This diagnosis is included in the official list of diseases that prevent serving a sentence.

Vladimir Kara-Murza is a prisoner of conscience and must be released immediately and unconditionally.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Russian. You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 13 September 2024

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Vladimir Kara-Murza, he/him

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://oneamnesty.sharepoint.com/sites/iar/12f2b5c2-ce3b-4166-95cb-300ce9e07cec/pages/IARUrgentActionHomepage.aspx>