

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 14, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the undersigned Members of Congress, continue to be deeply concerned over the deteriorating human rights situation in Russia, and over the ongoing assaults on civil society and the rule of law under the government of Vladimir Putin. Therefore, we respectfully request that you add more names to the Magnitsky list against any Russian official responsible or connected to this crackdown of fundamental human rights.

On December 14, 2012, you signed the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act, a bipartisan measure that aims to ensure that Russian officials involved in human rights abuses and corruption do not get access to the United States and to our financial system. This law envisages sanctions against those responsible for “gross violations of internationally recognized human rights committed against individuals seeking ... to obtain, exercise, defend, or promote ... the freedoms of religion, expression, association, and assembly, and the rights to a fair trial and democratic elections, in Russia.”

Yet to date, only 18 low-level officials have been added to the list of sanctioned individuals by the U.S. Government, and, contrary to expectations, the list has not been updated since April 2013.

We urge you to use your authority to expand the list of sanctioned individuals under the Magnitsky Act to include senior human rights violators in President Putin’s government. Such a move would send a clear message that the United States will not stand for the Kremlin’s abuse of power—whether internally or externally—and that we are serious about defending our values.

Your Administration has already been given several proposed names to be included on the Magnitsky list since April 2013, yet none have been added. Therefore we are resending a list of persons, compiled by several NGOs – both U.S. and Russian - that should be considered for immediate inclusion in the Magnitsky list, and we hope that your Administration will sanction these individuals and send a strong signal that human rights abusers will not be welcome in the United States and that they will be held accountable for their actions.



ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Chairman Emeritus
House Foreign Affairs Committee

Sincerely,



JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Co-Chairman
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

CC: Secretary of State, John Kerry;
David Kostelancik – Director, Office of Russian Affairs;
Ambassador Daniel Fried – Coordinator for Sanctions Policy