

**For Immediate Release:** April 10, 2023

**Media Contacts:** Shamari White, [hrf@westendstrategy.com](mailto:hrf@westendstrategy.com), (202) 714-4129

## **Democracy Organizations Demand the Release of Vladimir Kara-Murza One Year into Arbitrary Arrest and Detention**

**Washington, D.C.** – On the anniversary of Vladimir Kara-Murza’s arbitrary arrest and detention in Moscow, the Free Russia Foundation, George W. Bush Institute, Global Magnitsky Justice Campaign, Human Rights First, McCain Institute, National Endowment for Democracy, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, and Ronald Reagan Institute release the following statement:

Tomorrow, April 11, marks the one-year anniversary of the [arrest](#) of Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian pro-democracy leader, journalist, and historian who has been detained in Russia for criticizing the Putin regime and its war in Ukraine. Russian authorities must immediately and unconditionally release him and all those who have been wrongfully detained for exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

Over the past year, Kara-Murza has faced a growing count of politically motivated and baseless charges, including spreading “deliberately false information” about the Russian Armed Forces, involvement with an “undesirable” foreign organization, and “high treason.” Last week, during his closed-door trial, prosecutors requested a [25-year sentence](#) in a “strict regime” prison colony. In detention, Kara-Murza’s health has [significantly deteriorated](#), and he has suffered from polyneuropathy caused by two near-fatal poisoning [attacks](#) in Russia in 2015 and 2017.

Since his arrest, Kara-Murza has been globally recognized for his courage in standing up for freedom, democracy, and human rights in Russia and was awarded the 2022 [Václav Havel Human Rights Prize](#). Both the [Canadian](#) and [U.S.](#) governments have condemned his ongoing arbitrary detention and imposed Magnitsky-style sanctions on several Russians involved in his case, an important measure in support of Kara-Murza, whom the late Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) recognized as “one of the most passionate and effective advocates for the passage of the Magnitsky Act.”

Kara-Murza’s detention is part of a widespread campaign by the Putin regime to silence dissent and crack down on civil society and the media in Russia. An estimated [20,000 people](#) have been detained in Russia for criticizing its war in Ukraine since February 2022, and an estimated [551 political prisoners](#) are currently being held by Russia. This January, UN experts [expressed](#) alarm over Russia’s growing repression of civil society, human rights defenders, and media outlets.

In solidarity with Kara-Murza's hope for a free and democratic Russia, our organizations actively support:

- The immediate and unconditional release of Vladimir Kara-Murza and all political prisoners detained in Russia;
- The protection of civil society, human rights defenders, media outlets, and journalists facing repression in Russia;
- An immediate end to Russia's war in Ukraine and respect for Ukrainian sovereignty; and
- Accountability for Vladimir Putin and his regime for gross violations of human rights and other serious international crimes.

On Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at 3:00 pm ET, the above-named organizations will host an event in the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, marking the anniversary of Kara-Murza's detention.

*A Year of Injustice: The One-year Anniversary of Vladimir Kara-Murza's Wrongful, Unlawful, and Arbitrary Detention* is open to the registered press. For more details and to RSVP, please visit the [event page](#) or contact Pedro Pizano, Manager of the McCain Institute's Human Rights and Democracy Program, at [Pedro.Pizano@asu.edu](mailto:Pedro.Pizano@asu.edu).