



STATEMENT BY CHAIRS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEES CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF VLADIMIR KARA-MURZA

27 April 2022

We, the Chairs of our respective national parliaments' Foreign Affairs Committees, call on the Russian authorities to immediately release Vladimir Kara-Murza. He has been detained and is now charged under draconian laws that ban criticism of Russia's brutal war against Ukraine.

On 11 April 2022, Russian activist, journalist and politician Vladimir Kara-Murza was arrested outside of his Moscow home following an interview on CNN where he criticized Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The following day, he was sentenced to 15 days in prison for disobeying police orders.

On 22 April 2022, a Russian court charged Vladimir Kara-Murza under Russia's new law that bans the spreading of "false" information about the Russian military, and he could now face up to 15 years in prison. These latest charges against Vladimir Kara-Murza are a blatant fabrication meant to distract attention from Putin's war crimes and deter other courageous Russians from speaking out against the Kremlin.

In 2015 and 2017, Vladimir Kara-Murza survived two near-fatal poisonings, traced by investigative journalists to Russian authorities. Consequently, we are deeply concerned about Vladimir Kara-Murza's safety.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, over 15,000 Russians have been detained for criticizing or opposing the war, or peacefully demonstrating against it. In addition, hundreds of Russians have been charged under the same Orwellian law that Vladimir Kara-Murza is accused of contravening. Putin and his regime have shown themselves to be willing to break any law, domestic or international, to suppress political opposition at home and subjugate neighbouring countries. We call on all democratic nations and allies to oppose criminal behaviour like this to protect human rights in Russia and worldwide. Together with the free world, we stand in solidarity both with Ukraine and with Russian civil society in these difficult times.

We condemn the Putin regime's brutal repression of free speech and independent media in Russia and demand the immediate release of Vladimir Kara-Murza and all the prisoners of conscience whom the Russian government has detained.

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