United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 11, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write to express our grave concern for the U.S. nationals detained by the Russian Federation under circumstances that raise serious questions about their safety and wellbeing, due process, and violations to international norms. In particular, we write with concern for U.S. nationals who have been detained for extended periods and are recognized by the Department of State as 'cases of concern' but who have not yet been designated as wrongfully detained under the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act ("Levinson Act") by the Department, a reality which deeply undermines the negotiating position of the United States in securing their safe and rightful return home, perpetuating their suffering under an unjust regime.

Importantly, Stephen Hubbard is the only American who has been designated as a wrongful detainee in Russia. A U.S. citizen with broad familial ties across the U.S., Stephen is currently 74 years old and has been detained since April 2, 2022. He was formally designated as a wrongful detainee in January 2025, and we continue to join in his family's advocacy to bring Stephen home urgently and hold Russia accountable for its cruel use of hostage diplomacy.

We recognize and appreciate the continued efforts by the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs (SPEHA), the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, and others in the administration who continuously engage on these critical cases and with the families of those wrongfully held by the Russian government, as well as the efforts of the Department of State to engage with Congress on constituent cases. We join the Gilman family in their relief following this week's release of Robert Gilman after 1,666 days wrongfully detained in Russia and after horrific reports on his health and the conditions of his imprisonment. Today, at least 5 other Americans remain in these conditions. The continued detention of Americans in Russia underscores the need for sustained engagement and a renewed urgency to obtain their release, including in independent and direct negotiations with the Russian government separate from broader, ongoing negotiations on Russia's war against Ukraine. Given the stalled status of negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, we are deeply concerned that tying the fate of these Americans and their families to broader issues in the U.S.-Russia relationship and deferring their designation as wrongful detainees merely prolongs their hardship.

Families of detainees endure significant emotional and financial hardship while awaiting progress on the release of their loved ones. Several of our offices have received troubling reports from family and community members regarding the conditions of detention of their loved ones and the perpetual nature of their detention. Many detainees have remained in Russian custody for years with no clear pathway for their release or return to the United States. As time passes, the

physical, emotional, and psychological toll on both the detainees and their families continues to mount. The cases of detained U.S. nationals in Russia, include, but are not limited to, many of our constituents. As of August 12, 2026, these individuals have been held in Russian custody for the following days:

- Andre Khachatoorian – 1,688 days
- David Barnes – 1,671 days
- Olga Jezler – 1,506 days
- Alexsandr Antonov – 524 days
- Chuck Zimmerman – 420 days

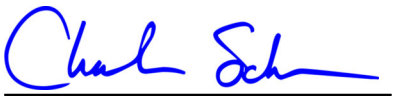
We are united in the belief that the safe return of U.S. nationals detained abroad must remain a priority of the United States government. We are deeply concerned that the current administration has yet to utilize the authorities outlined in the Levinson Act to designate these U.S. nationals detained by the Russian Federation as wrongful detainees and elevate their cases to SPEHA. This valuable tool would maximize U.S. government coordination and advance negotiations to ensure their swift release, and the designation is key for providing needed resources to the families as they advocate for their loved ones and health and other support to released detainees upon their return to the U.S.

We urge the administration to continue employing all diplomatic, economic, and strategic tools available to secure the release of these detained U.S. nationals, steadfastly support their families throughout this process, and conduct these negotiations regardless of a Russia-Ukraine peace process or other issues of bilateral concern. Specifically, we ask that this include:

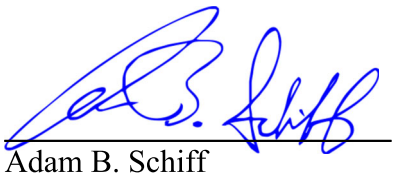
1. Continuing to demand and ensure adequate consular access to all U.S. nationals held in Russian detention.
2. Expediting the consideration and employment of the “wrongful detention” designation as intended under the Levinson Act and subsequent legislation that has expanded the Levinson Act, including continued communication with Congress on the criteria and deliberations of such designations.
3. A plan and path forward to secure the release of U.S. nationals currently detained in the Russian Federation outside of stalled negotiations related to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine or broader issues in the U.S.-Russia bilateral relationship.
4. Consideration of the use of the State Sponsor of Wrongful Detention designation that has already been used on other repeat offender nations, including Iran and Afghanistan.

We thank you for your continued engagement with Congress on these and other critical cases. We look forward to your response and continued cooperation in support of U.S. nationals detained abroad and their families here at home.

Sincerely,

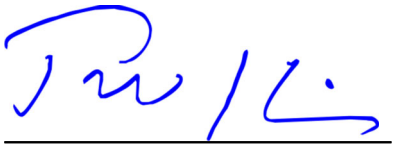


Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

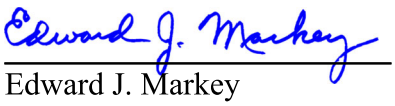


Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



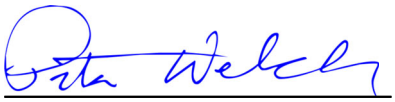
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



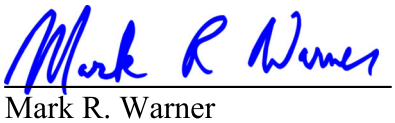
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

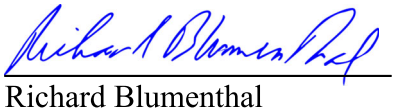
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



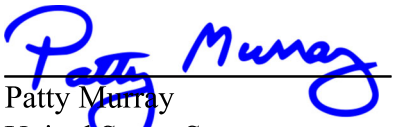
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

John Hickenlooper
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator