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The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We appreciate your leadership in advancing U.S. interests, protecting the American people, and promoting economic prosperity and democratic values around the world. Our nation and its allies have greatly benefited from the Department of State's diplomatic efforts.

We write this letter to urge the Department of State to designate Ms. Ksenia Karelina and Mr. Andre Khachatoorian as “wrongfully detained” by Russia.

In early 2024, Ms. Karelina, a dual U.S.-Russia citizen, was traveling to Russia to visit her family when she was detained. The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) charged her with high treason for having donated \$51.80 to a Ukraine-focused charity. She made this one-time donation to Razom, a New York City-based nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, on February 24, 2022, the first day of the Russian invasion. Moreover, her donation was made while Ms. Karelina was in the United States. While Ms. Karelina entered a guilty plea during her trial in August 2024, she did so with the understanding from her defense counsel that she was going to be convicted regardless of the facts and this was the only way to receive a lighter sentence. However, she was sentenced to 12 years in prison by the same judge who previously sentenced *Wall Street Journal* reporter Evan Gershkovich.

In 2021, Mr. Khachatoorian was traveling from California to Armenia to see his fiancée. During a layover in Moscow, he sought access to his medications, which were stored in his checked luggage. However, as Mr. Khachatoorian retrieved his medication from his luggage, a security guard noticed a container for a firearm and took him into custody for further questioning. His firearm was legally acquired, properly secured, and accompanied by all necessary documentation for international travel, which the airline confirmed prior to his U.S. departure. During his interrogation, he was deceived into applying for a Russian visa, which made his possession of a firearm illegal. As a result, he was convicted of arms smuggling in a Russian court and sentenced to eight years in prison by the same prosecutor and judge who handled Britney Griner's case.

The designation of wrongful detention will send an important message to Russia that their actions are inconsistent with international norms of justice. But more importantly, the designation of wrongful detention will permit the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs to begin negotiations on behalf of Ms. Karelina and Mr. Khachatoorian. Additionally, the designation will also convey hope to these wrongfully detained Americans and their families that they are not forgotten. It will reaffirm the U.S. commitment to seeing the Americans released and back on U.S. soil.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to your timely response. We are deeply grateful for your dedication to protecting these Americans and all other Americans who are abroad.

With deep gratitude,

Adam B. Schiff

Member of Congress

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