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COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND  
COOPERATION IN EUROPE (U.S.  
HELSINKI COMMISSION)

September 22, 2025

Maria Kalesnikava  
Penal colony No. 4. 246035  
Homiel', vulica Antoshkina 3,  
Republic of Belarus  
C/O Tatsiana Khomich

Dear Maria,

I am writing to let you know that your friends around the world have not forgotten you. We continue to stand with you and all the political prisoners in Belarus who remain unjustly imprisoned because of their peaceful beliefs and remain committed to seeking and securing your freedom and that of Belarus.

I understand that you have been facing deteriorating health and inhumane conditions while held hostage, including being held in isolation and with no communication with the outside world. I met with your sister and your advocates here: Freedom House, Amnesty International, and the McCain Institute, among others, and look forward to the day that you can come to Washington D.C. and walk in freedom with all of us.

I know opposition to Alyaksandr Lukashenka's authoritarian rule is necessary to bring about a free and democratic Belarus and applaud your courage, efforts, and dedication to this work. You have highlighted the scale of repression in Belarus, helping to further inform the work we do here in Washington, D.C. and around the world.

My friend Vladimir Kara-Murza who was recently released from wrongful detention in Russia, told me that the worst fear of a political prisoner is to be forgotten. Stay strong and know we have not forgotten you, Maria. You will be free.

As always, I remain,

Most sincerely,



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress