

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Moscow, Russia – August 23, 2012

STATEMENT BY GARRY KASPAROV

Monday, August 21, I visited the district office of the Investigative Committee of Russia to submit my complaints. The first for my illegal arrest and physical assault by the police. The second, against officer Dennis Ratnikov for his libelous accusation of assault against me. Ironically, libel was recently upgraded to a criminal charge in Russia in order to persecute citizens who were critical of the leadership! I answered the investigator's questions:

Did you assault the police officers? No. Did you offer resistance? I would not call it that, but I was being abducted unlawfully and did not want to be put on the bus. Did you bite the officer? Absolutely not. Even had I wanted to, there was no opportunity. Did you insult any officers with profane language? I admit that while being assaulted and in physical pain I used strong language in my emotional state.

The ICR (similar to the American FBI; they answer to the office of the President) will now decide whether or not to combine my two complaints into one. It was clear they were not happy about having to deal with this counterattack. But it was the security forces who created this absurd situation, and its absurdity does not mean it is not dangerous so I must respond seriously.

The latest evidence against the accusation that I bit officer Ratnikov on the hand is a chronological series of photographs by Artyom Geodakian clearly showing a small cut on his left hand *before* he participated in beating me. *[Links below.]* I do not know how he acquired this cut, but that is not my concern. I am lucky so many members of the media were there and indebted that many of them have lent their expertise to refuting the charges against me. Among them, The New Times, Grani, The Term, Novaya Gazeta, and the BBC. Several correspondents, including that of Radio Liberty, signed the witness statement in my defense.

This is all part of the remarkable support I have received here in Russia and abroad from politicians, actors, business leaders, and the global chess community. People I met only once at a long-ago conference have gotten in touch. My family and I are truly grateful. I am lucky enough to have a famous name and the resources for medical care and legal defense. Many in Russia are not so lucky, and if you see how I am treated with the whole world watching you can imagine what happens to activists here with no one watching and with no one to defend them. Such brutality by the police and the courts is a routine for them.

In the coming months, dozens of activists will be put on trial for protesting and other acts of defiance against the Putin regime. They need legal defense, medical aid, and their families often need assistance. You can help! We have established a non-profit foundation to receive donations for this purpose, called the Foundation for Democracy in Russia. These donations will go to helping those unjustly persecuted and their families. In the last few days we have received donations from people in more than a dozen countries, a wonderful show of solidarity. *[Links below.]*

Along with aiding these courageous individuals directly, each donation throws sand in the gears of the Putin repression machine. You see, in order to give the appearance of a legitimate government, the Kremlin allows trials and appeals and is signatory to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Putin relies on the inability of ordinary Russians to hire attorneys and defend themselves. The courts are Kremlin puppets, but they must go through the motions of justice to avoid even greater global condemnation and the risk that Western leaders will finally call for Russia's expulsion from international covenants. This would cost Putin and his cronies business deals and trade agreements – in other words it would hit them where it hurts, their wallets! Putin's oligarchs will be forced to realize it is against their best interests to continue persecuting innocent people for speaking their minds.

People power does not let Western leaders off the hook. If they take the ideals of freedom and justice seriously, they must pass legislation to sanction Putin and his officials for punishing innocents and destroying the rule of law in Russia. In the US, the Magnitsky Act in the Senate (S.1039) would show these thugs that they will be held accountable for their actions. No more oppression at home in Russia while traveling freely abroad and keeping their loot in European and American banks. Similar legislation exists in the European Union. You have a voice, so let your representatives know how you feel!

Garry Kasparov

LINKS

- Chronological photo sequence showing officer Ratnikov's hand injury before he participated in the assault on Mr. Kasparov.
 - Original: <http://www.argumenti.ru/print/society/2012/08/197586>
 - English: <http://www.theotherussia.org/2012/08/22/russian-newspapers-photographs-prove-kasparovs-innocence/>
- How you can help. Links to contact your representatives or donate to the Foundation for Democracy in Russia.
 - <http://www.theotherussia.org/2012/08/20/pussy-riot-verdict-kasparov-arrest-how-you-can-help/>
 - <http://www.theotherussia.org/support-the-other-russia/>
- Google co-founder Sergey Brin with a message of support.
<https://plus.google.com/109813896768294978296/posts/VDzJbREx4K8>
- British actor and writer Stephen Fry shows support for Pussy Riot and has a marvelous retort when criticized for it. <http://on.fb.me/R2us4L>