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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

September 22, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act requires the President, upon receipt of a request from the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, to determine whether a foreign person has engaged in a “gross violation of internationally recognized human rights” against an individual who “expose[s] illegal activity carried out by government officials” or “obtain[s], exercise[s], defend[s], or promote[s] internationally recognized human rights and freedoms,” such as freedom of expression and the right to a fair trial. The President must, no later than 120 days after receiving such a request, make such a determination and submit a report with respect to it, which includes a statement of whether or not the President will impose or intends to impose sanctions with respect to the person.

The ongoing imprisonment of Russian opposition politician Vladimir Kara-Murza, which we assess is based on fabricated and politically-motivated charges, suggests that he could be a victim of a gross violation of his internationally recognized human rights. Mr. Kara-Murza has a long history of holding human rights abusers accountable, including through his advocacy for the passage and implementation of the original Magnitsky Act, as well as the Global Magnitsky Act. We believe this history of defending and promoting human rights may have motivated assassination attempts against Mr. Kara-Murza in 2015 and 2017.

This advocacy, as well as his opposition to the Russian Federation’s illegal war in Ukraine, are likely the primary reasons for his current wrongful imprisonment. Furthermore, one of the pending charges against Mr. Kara-Murza pertains to his participation in a conference in support of Russian political prisoners, which could suggest that the Russian government targeted him for his defense of their human rights.

We request that you make determinations regarding whether any foreign person is responsible for any such violations related to Mr. Kara-Murza, and if so, regarding the imposition of sanctions, consistent with the Global Magnitsky Human Rights

Accountability Act. Our expectation is that in making your determination you will consider any relevant information, including with respect to all relevant officials and law enforcement in the Russian Federation.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R".

Robert Menendez
Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James E. Risch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J".

James E. Risch
Ranking Member