

Dear Server Mustafayev

You do not know me but I am one of the many people around the world who know of you and who admire you greatly for your courage in standing up to the lawless actions of the Russian regime. By contrast with it, you exemplify the highest human values and sheer decency. You have had to face the cruel and illegal actions of a government which both tyrannizes its unhappy people and makes victims of those such as you and your fellow prisoners from Ukraine and its occupied Crimea who have spoken out so eloquently and bravely for human rights, truth in journalism and freedom of expression. You also willingly took the risk of condemning the illegal Russian invasion and occupation of your beloved homeland of Crimea.

You have paid a heavy price for doing so and have had to endure the ludicrous procedures of the failing Russian legal system. You were charged with terrorism and planning to seize power by violence. You must have appreciated the irony of such charges coming from the Russian authorities. In your trial you were denied proper medical treatment when you fell ill and were forced to appear in court. The sentence you received was vindictive and unjust and you are serving it in harsh conditions thousands of miles from your beloved family, friends and homeland. Such a travesty of justice and your treatment as a prisoner defies all human standards.

You may never see this letter but I hope that it may reach somehow reach you so that you know you have supporters who think of you with great admiration for your courage and who are working for your release. We salute you for your outstanding work and hope that your example will be a flame to inspire others. We need to remember your words: *'It's easy to break a finger, impossible to shatter a fist. United, we are invincible.'*

Without people such as you in the forefront humanity cannot advance. Thank you from all my heart. I hope one day that we will meet in happier times.

[Margaret MacMillan](#)

*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author*