



23 August 2021

**The Honorable Joseph Biden  
President  
The White House Office of the President  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20500 USA**

Dear Mr. President,

We, the undersigned, are a group of organizations and individuals, advocates, scholars, faith leaders, practitioners and non-practitioners that share a common interest in the promotion of universal human rights.

We are writing to express concern about the case of Youth Pastor Yaroslav Mysyak who Ukrainian authorities have falsely held responsible for the death of his grandparents and uncle. The Transcarpathian Regional Court in August 1999 initially sentenced to Pastor Mysyak to death by shooting till the death sentence was overturned due to the nationwide moratorium on the death penalty. The Ukrainian authorities have kept him in prison these 23 years, with reports of torture being used by authorities to force a written admission of guilt. We ask that as you meet with President Volodymyr Zelensky on August 30<sup>th</sup>, you raise the case of Pastor Yaroslav Mysyak and appeal to the President to drop all charges against the pastor.

Human Rights organizations have raised concerns with the judicial process and failures to ensure Pastor Mysyak's right to a fair trial. Recent findings have produced clear evidence that the forensic report that was used to put Pastor Mysyak in jail was falsified. In addition, already in 1998 Amnesty International reported how there was reason to believe that Pastor Yaroslav Mysyak was framed for the murders. The investigation relied heavily on the forced admission of guilt and disregarded the lack of evidence to incriminate Mysyak. Amnesty

International had received allegations of corruption among law enforcement officials in Uzhgorod, the home-city of Pastor Mysyak, including reports that some local police officers might have been involved in the murders which were later attributed to Yaroslav Mysyak. The report also described how law enforcement officials in the city of Uzhgorod reportedly tortured Yaroslav Mysyak by electric shocks, after his arrest in May 1998. Mysyak's father who was able to secure a visit to see his son when authorities transferred him to a psychiatric hospital in the city of Lviv, was able to take photographs which showed the burn marks on Yaroslav Mysyak's hands where the electric shocks had been applied.<sup>1</sup>

In the State Department's recent 2020 Human Rights Report on Ukraine, it documents severe police abuse of detainees in Ukraine with reports of law enforcement using torture and mistreatment to extract confessions. The recent example being given of two police officers from Uzhgorod, the city of Pastor Mysyak.<sup>2</sup>

We urge President Biden as he meets with President Zelensky to raise the case of Pastor Mysyak. As President Biden has expressed collaboration with Ukraine to fight corruption, the retrial and acquittal of Pastor Mysyak would be one clear step in addressing the widespread police corruption and arbitrary arrests of individuals in Ukraine.

Sincerely,

Signatures

### **Organizations**

Brickerville Grace Fellowship

Center for Pluralism

Christian Freedom International

Citizen Power Initiatives for China

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, *Concerns in Europe: July-December 1998*, 31 March 1999, EUR 01/001/1999, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur01/001/1999/en/>. page 68

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Ukraine 2020 Human Rights Report*, 30 March 2021, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/ukraine/>.

Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de  
Conscience

Faith & Liberty DC

Forum for Religious Freedom-Europe (FOREF Europe)

Gate City Church (New Hampshire)

HMK Hilfe für Mensch und Kirche

Hope of Freedom

Institute for Religious Freedom (Ukraine)

Jubilee Campaign USA

Junior Sacerdotal Council of Caodai

Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group

LYN Community

The Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church of America

### **Individuals [International Religious Freedom Roundtable]**

Michail Babchuk

*President*

*BMD Express inc*

Joseph Berchtold

*STIFTUNG ZUR FÖRDERUNG DER CHRISTLICHEN*

Lareina Kiser

*Director*

*Prayer Pioneers*

Scott Morgan

*President*

*Red Eagle Enterprises*

Vitaliy Pavlenko

*Deacon*

## **Individuals [public [petition](#)]**

Melnichuk Anatoly

Алексей

Darya Angere

Toly Babak

Lyudmila Babak

Irina Blokhin

Olexiy Boyko

Phillip Bradshaw

Tetyana Brychka

Markus Buetzer

Tetiana Bunch

Marie Rose Chambovey

Poujol Chantal

Екатерина Чернова (Ch)

Roman Chirva

Pavlo Chubay

Marie-Annick Couderc

Rittiner Danielle

Shevchenko David

Andrei Didenko

Dmytro Degtyaryov

Alex Dudin

Ruth Frösch

George Gerasimyak

Світлана Глеба

Йовдий Григорий

Noah Goldthwaite

Lynn Gramm

Vira Hutnyk

David Ilyin

Monika Kern

Olga Kolesnyk

Svitlana Iotko

Ursula Lüthi

Artem Lysychuk

Bogdan Maksimchuk

Vitaliy Mantay

Mykola Matovka

Pavlo Marchenko

Nina Matovka

Nadiya Matviychuk

Leonid Momotok

Snizhana Mysyak

Nadezhda Nazarchuk

Svetlana Nazarchuk

Vitaliy Pavlenko  
Deacon

Pavlo Pavlovich

Benjamin Plyaskin

Alexander Ravikovich

Stepan Romaso

Manuel S.

Михаил Шанта

Inna Shargorodska

Nelli Sharkevich

Sergey Shelestov

Olga Sinyuk

Traci Smith

Amir Sohail

Serhii Solodovnyk

Vladimir Styopin

Werner Sulzer

Andrey Tochinskiy

Ruth Tschopp

Tatyana Tseona

Angelina Tsernoseva

Yuliya Veremiy

Yvonne Wildbolz

Betty Winholtz

Eduard Yarin

Yelena Yarin

Natalia Zhyriada