

Sirs:

We have no doubts that our country's authorities initiated the first trial of Mikhail Khodorkovsky first and foremost because he held an independent political position and was convinced of the need to do everything possible to thwart the curtailment of democratic institutions in the Russian Federation. This manifested itself in the form of the considerable financial support that he rendered to opposition political parties – in full compliance with the law, but contrary, to the wishes of the authorities.

The obvious political motivation of the first trial provided every ground to recognise Mikhail Khodorkovsky as a political prisoner. The reason for the second trial against him, with its charges that were absurd to the point of being comical, became his work as a political commentator – his interviews and articles written from prison. These public statements not only contain an analysis of what Khodorkovsky considers to be the erroneous political and economic course being taken by the current leadership of the Russian Federation, but also offer proposals on how to change this course. No hardships of prison life, not even the grossest violations of his rights in detention, have been able to break this person.

Over his years in prison, Mikhail Khodorkovsky has turned into a prominent public figure, capable of becoming a leader of a united democratic opposition. The ruling authoritarian regime too knows this well.

In these conditions, the leadership of the RF has conducted a shameful second trial, and by way of unprecedented pressure on the court has attained the issuance of a new harsh sentence, the main objective of which was - not to allow the release of M. Khodorkovsky from jail.

We maintain that any person convicted for no other reason than giving voice to his convictions is a prisoner of conscience, and it is precisely for this reason that we are asking you to reconsider your position in relation to Mikhail Khodorkovsky and to recognise this status for him. We consider it necessary to recognise for Mikhail Khodorkovsky's like-minded friend Platon Lebedev, unjustly convicted together with him, who was used in the capacity of a hostage at an early stage of the first trial, when the authorities had not yet made up their minds to arrest Khodorkovsky and were hoping to intimidate and squeeze him into emigration by arresting Lebedev.

We have received confirmation on numerous occasions in recent times that your esteemed organisation knows how to react quickly and expeditiously to the violations of fundamental human rights that the Russian authorities are allowing to take place.

We do not know what other new ordeals await Khodorkovsky and Lebedev, and so we turn to you with a request to recognise them as prisoners of conscience without any undue delay. We feel this would be a powerful method of bringing additional public attention to the fate of these courageous people.

**Writers:**

Konstantin Azadovsky, the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Saint-Petersburg PEN-Club,  
Associate Member of the German Academy of Language and Literature.

Boris Akunin, writer.

Sergey Gandlevsky, poet, member of the Russian PEN-Centre.

Nina Katerli, write, member of the Saint-Petersburg PEN-Club

Alexey Simonov, Vice-President of the Russian PEN-Centre, the Chair of the Glasnost Protection  
Foundation

Boris Strugatsky, writer, member of the Saint-Petersburg PEN-Club,

Igor Irtenev, Russian poet

Marietta Chudakova, member of the European Academy, Professor of the Literature Institute (Moscow).

Ludmila Ulitskaya, writer, member of the Executive Committee of the Russian PEN-Centre

Arkady Vaksberg, writer, Vice-President of the Russian PEN-Centre

**Actors and artistic directors:**

Liya Akhedzhaklova, People's Artist of the RF

Oleg Basilashvili, People's Artist of the RF

Kama Ginkas, film director, People's Artist of the RF, Professor

Alexey Devotchenko, RF Honoured Artist

Eldar Ryazanov, People's Artist of the USSR.

Natalya Fateyeva, People's Artist of the RF

Alexander Feklistov, actor

Genrietta Yanovskaya, Chief Stage Director of the Youth Theatre, People's Artist of the RF.

Igor Yasulovich, People's Artist of the RF

Mikhail Kazakov, film director, theatre and movie actor, People's Artist of the RF.

Sergey Yursky, Soviet and Russian theatre and movie actor, stage director, script writer, RSFSR People's Artist

**Scientists and scholars:**

Sergey Beletsky, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor.

Rafail Ganelin, Doctor of Historical Sciences, corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Alexander Gorodnitsky, Academician of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, poet, member of the Executive Committee of the Russian PEN-Centre

Boris Yegorov, D.Litt , Professor

Alexander Kobrinsky, D.Litt, Professor

Alexander Lavrov, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, member of the Saint-Petersburg PEN-Club.

Irina Levinskaya, Doctor of Historical Sciences., member of the Saint-Petersburg PEN-Club

Oleg Lekmanov, D.Litt, Moscow State University Professor

Yuri Ryzhov, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Dmitry Zimin, Doctor of Technical Sciences, laureate of the RF State Award, laureate of the A.S. Popov Award of the USSR Academy of Sciences, founder and honorary president of AO Vympelcom (BeeLine), Founder of the Dynasty Charitable Foundation, founder of the Prosvetitel Literary Award

Evgeny Gontmakher, Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor

Marc Yuriyevich Urnov, Doctor of Political Sciences.

Irina Yasina, economist

Mikhail Gennadiyevich Delyagin, Academician of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, Doctor of Economic Sciences, Director of the Institute of Problems of Globalisation

### **Journalists:**

Vladimir Pozner, TV presenter, the First President of the Russian Television Academy (1994—2008)

Leonid Parfenov, journalist, TV presenter.

Dmitry Muratov, *Novaya Gazeta* editor-in-chief

Dmitry Krylov, TV presenter

Boris Vishnevsky, *Novaya Gazeta* observer, laureate of the Russia's Golden Quill award, member of the Saint-Petersburg PEN-Club.

Maria Sedykh, journalist, member of the Union of Theatre Workers and member of the Union of Journalists

Yuri Rost, photographer, journalist, writer, actor

Victor Shenderovich, writer, satirist, TV and radio presenter.

### **Musicians and visual artists:**

Gidon Kremer, musician, laureate of the Triumph award.

Arvo Pärt, modern Estonian composer.

Boris Zhutovsky, visual artist, illustrator, writer