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Russia

Free Boris Kagarlitsky and all other Russian anti-war political prisoners!

- News from around the world -

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Also published at <https://freeboris.info/> Signatories who wish to be contacted by the campaign should sign on at this site

We, the undersigned, were deeply shocked to learn that on February 13 the leading Russian socialist intellectual and anti-war activist Dr Boris Kagarlitsky (65) was sentenced to five years in prison.

Dr Kagarlitsky was arrested on the absurd charge of 'justifying terrorism' in July last year. After a global campaign reflecting his worldwide reputation as a writer and critic of capitalism and imperialism, his trial ended on December 12 with a guilty verdict and a fine of 609,000 roubles (\$US6550).

The prosecution then appealed against the fine as 'unjust due to its excessive leniency' and claimed falsely that Dr Kagarlitsky was unable to pay the fine and had failed to cooperate with the court. In fact, he had paid the fine in full and provided the court with everything it requested.

On February 13 a military court of appeal sent him to prison for five years and banned him from running a website for two years after his release.

The reversal of the original court decision is a deliberate insult to the many thousands of activists, academics, and artists around the world who respect Dr Kagarlitsky and took part in the global campaign for his release. The section of Russian law used against Dr Kagarlitsky effectively prohibits free expression. The decision to replace the fine with imprisonment was made under a completely trumped-up pretext. Undoubtedly, the court's action represents an attempt to silence criticism in the Russian Federation of the government's war in Ukraine, which is turning the country into a prison.

The sham trial of Dr Kagarlitsky is the latest in a wave of brutal repression against the left-wing movements in Russia. Organizations that have consistently criticized imperialism, Western and otherwise, are now under direct attack, many of them banned. Dozens of activists are already serving long terms simply because they disagree with the policies of the Russian government and have the courage to speak up. Many of them are tortured and subjected to life-threatening conditions in Russian penal colonies, deprived of basic medical care. Left-wing politicians are forced to flee Russia, facing criminal charges. International trade unions such as IndustriALL and the International Transport Federation are banned and any contact with them will result in long prison sentences.

There is a clear reason for this crackdown on the Russian left. The heavy toll of the war gives rise to growing discontent among the mass of working people. The poor pay for this massacre with their lives and wellbeing, and opposition to war is consistently highest among the poorest. The left has the message and resolve to expose the connection between imperialist war and human suffering.

Dr Kagarlitsky has responded to the court's outrageous decision with calm and dignity: 'We just need to live a little longer and survive this dark period for our country,' he said. Russia is nearing a period of radical change and upheaval, and freedom for Dr Kagarlitsky and other activists is a condition for these changes to take a progressive course.

We demand that Boris Kagarlitsky and all other anti-war prisoners be released immediately and unconditionally.

Free Boris Kagarlitsky and all other Russian anti-war political prisoners!

We also call on the authorities of the Russian Federation to reverse their growing repression of dissent and respect their citizens' freedom of speech and right to protest.

Lead signatories (short list — full list available [here](#))

Naomi Klein, writer (Canada)

Jeremy Corbyn MP (UK)

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, political leader (France)

Slavoj Žižek, Birkbeck and Ljubljana Universities (Slovenia)

Tariq Ali, writer (UK)

Yanis Varoufakis, writer and political leader (Greece)

Judy Rebick, feminist writer and activist (Canada)

Myriam Bregman, National Deputy (Argentina)

Nicolás del Caño, National Deputy (Argentina)

Christian Castillo, National Deputy (Argentina)

Alejandro Vilca, National Deputy (Argentina)

Fernanda Melchionna, Federal Deputy (Brazil)

Sâmia Bomfim, Federal Deputy (Brazil)

Walden Bello, Focus on the Global South (The Philippines)

Luciana Genro, State Deputy, Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil)

Kavita Krishnan, women's rights activist (India)

Bernd Riexinger Member of the Bundestag (Germany)

Richard Boyd-Barrett, TD (Ireland)

John McDonnell MP (UK)

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Fredric Jameson, Duke University (USA)

Étienne Balibar, Université Paris-Nanterre (France)

Lin Chun, London School of Economics (UK/China)

Kohei Saito, University of Tokyo (Japan)

Claudio Katz, University of Buenos Aires (Argentina)

Luis Bonilla-Molina, Otras Voces en Educación (Venezuela)

Reinaldo Iturriza López, sociologist (Venezuela)

Patrick Bond (University of Johannesburg)

Lindsey German, Stop the War Coalition (UK)

Alex Callinicos, King's College London (UK)

Andrej Hunko, Member of the Bundestag (Germany)

Jodi Dean, Hobart-William Smith (USA)

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