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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Yulia Tymoshenko Writes Open Letter to 'Moral Warrior' Khodorkovsky

By The Moscow Times

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Yulia Tymoshenko has been kept behind bars since 2011 in what many argue is a politically motivated case.

Ukraine's jailed former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko has sent an open letter to former tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, welcoming his release from decade-long imprisonment in Russia as the emergence of a "moral warrior" to fight for humanitarian values.

"I have no doubt that he has long since outgrown the trivial passion for collecting banknotes," Tymoshenko said in the open letter published on her website.

"I, like many, believe that the release of Mikhail Khodorkovsky has given the world a strong, intellectual and moral warrior who together with others will be able to fill humanity with at least little more love and compassion," the letter said.

"The main thing, and I am certain of this, is that Mikhail Khodorkovsky has become

particularly inspired to make the world less cruel and more just for many people," she said.

Shortly after his release from a Russian prison less than a week ago, Khodorkovsky said he would not return to business or politics, but would speak out on behalf of other political prisoners, including Tymoshenko and those connected to his now-defunct oil company, Yukos.

He was also looking for a little "private time" with his family, Khodorkovsky said, and has applied for a visa to go to Switzerland to visit the school that his sons are attending, Swiss Foreign Ministry officials said on Tuesday.

While Khodorkovsky had business interests and bank deposits in Switzerland before his arrest, and his sons go to school in that country, Swiss officials insisted that his request for a three-month visa was no indication of where he might want to settle, The Associated Press reported.

Tymoshenko, jailed since 2011 on what many see as politically motivated charges, said in her letter that years in prison fail to break political prisoners' spirit.

"Through some unknown law, political prisoners, being in captivity, develop enough internal freedom to fill the world three times over," she said.

Comparing political prisoners to people who survived a clinical death, she said that both "return from the other side of reality very much changed," with a heightened ethical sense and a loss of interest in common material pursuits.

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