

Russia Demands Access to Russian Drug Smuggler in U.S. Jail.

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia has summoned an U.S. diplomat to demand diplomatic and medical access to a Russian drug smuggler imprisoned in the U.S., who Moscow says was tortured when he was arrested in 2010.

In a statement late on Friday, the Foreign Ministry said a Russian doctor should examine Konstantin Yaroshenko, a pilot serving 20 years for conspiracy to smuggle cocaine into the U.S. whose health has been worsening, according to his lawyer.

The countries are already at odds on numerous issues including Syria, Russia's crackdown on internal dissent, U.S. missile defence, Ukraine, and Russia's decision to shelter Edward Snowden, source of numerous revelations on U.S. electronic surveillance.

Yaroshenko's lawyer, Alexei Tarasov, told RT television that his client had experienced symptoms of a heart attack, but was not being helped. He said Yaroshenko had told him he

might not live through the weekend.

"The Russian side emphasised that the full responsibility for the life and health of our fellow citizen lies with the U.S. authorities," the Foreign Ministry said.

"We have repeatedly drawn attention to the worsening of his chronic illnesses that resulted from the torture and abuse he suffered during his arrest."

The U.S. Embassy said it could not discuss Yaroshenko's case unless he signed a privacy waiver.

"The U.S. is committed to meeting its obligations under both international and domestic law for proper treatments of persons detained or incarcerated in the criminal justice system, including the provision of adequate medical care," a spokesman said in a statement.

He said that in the meeting, the U.S. diplomat had raised concerns about human rights in Russia, notably the jailing of political protesters and of an environmental activist who had investigated abuses in the preparations for the Sochi Winter Olympics.

"At the meeting, we also raised concerns with children caught up in the ban on U.S. adoptions and the recent order signed by [Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev] banning adoptions by single parents from countries where same-sex marriages are permitted."

The adoption ban was part of Russia's response to the U.S. Magnitsky Act, which subjects Russian officials implicated in the death of Russian whistleblower Sergei Magnitsky to visa bans and asset freezes in the U.S.

Call for extradition

Magnitsky died in suspicious circumstances in his jail cell in 2009, just before he was due to be released.

Moscow has called for Yaroshenko to be extradited along with jailed arms dealer Viktor Bout, accusing the U.S. of biased and politically motivated prosecutions of its citizens.

The Foreign Ministry said diplomats and doctors were preparing to visit the Fort Dix Federal Correctional Facility in New Jersey where Yaroshenko is imprisoned.

"Russia has urged the U.S. authorities not to obstruct this mission, but instead offer all possible assistance," the ministry said.

The embassy spokesman said that the U.S. ensured consular access for jailed foreigners, adding: "Russian consular officials have visited Mr. Yaroshenko a number of times, most recently in January."

Yaroshenko was arrested by U.S. special forces in the Liberian capital Monrovia in May 2010 and convicted in 2011. An appeal was rejected last year.

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