

Russian Convicted of Drug Smuggling in U.S. Asks Putin Help With Transfer

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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NEW YORK — A Russian pilot sentenced to 20 years in prison in the U.S. for drug trafficking has appealed to President Vladimir Putin to facilitate his transfer back to Russia, his lawyer said.

In his letter, Konstantin Yaroshenko said he was critically ill and urged Putin to personally contact U.S. President Barack Obama about his case, Russian media reported.

"In Russia I have a wife, a daughter and a 73-year old mother who I have not seen for many years and who I want to see at least one more time," Yaroshenko wrote.

Russian officials have repeatedly condemned the treatment of Yaroshenko.

The Foreign Ministry said last week that the United States' refusal to extradite the pilot was inadmissible and warned that it would harm bilateral ties.

Yaroshenko was detained by U.S. law enforcement officers in the African state of Liberia in 2010 before being taken to the U.S. to stand trial.

He pleaded innocent to drug trafficking but was convicted and sentenced in April 2011 for colluding to smuggle cocaine into the United States.

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