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Jailed Kremlin Critic Kara-Murza Receives European Rights Award

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Russian opposition activist Vladimir Kara-Murza. **Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS**

Jailed Kremlin critic Vladimir Kara-Murza received the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize for "outstanding actions of civil society in the protection of human rights around the world."

The prize was awarded during the opening of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)'s autumn session in Strasbourg on Monday.

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Kara-Murza, an outspoken critic of Russia's war in Ukraine who is in jail awaiting trial for charges including treason and spreading "fakes" about the military, was hailed as having "incredible courage."

"Despite the risks, Vladimir Kara-Murza had the courage to return to his country to continue his fight, even while having the possibility to stay safe. [...] It takes incredible courage in

today’s Russia to stand against the power in place. Today, Mr. Kara-Murza is showing this courage, from his prison cell,” PACE President Tiny Kox said during the session.

In a statement read by his wife Yevgenia, Kara-Murza dedicated the prize to the thousands of Russians who have voiced opposition to the war in Ukraine and pledged that “a peaceful, democratic and Putin-free Russia” would someday return to the Council of Europe.

Kara-Murza will receive a 60,000-euro sum as part of the prize.

The award was given days after Russia's oldest human rights group, Memorial, was named the recipient of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize alongside jailed Belarusian activist Ales Bialiatski and Ukraine's Center for Civil Liberties.

Last year's Vaclav Havel Prize was awarded to Maria Kolesnikova, a jailed Belarusian political activist who helped lead historic pro-democracy protests in her country in 2020.

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