

Putin Names Swapped Convict Yaroshenko to Prison Oversight Spot

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Konstantin Yaroshenko. **Anton Novodezhkin / TASS**

Russian pilot Konstantin Yaroshenko, who spent more than a decade in a U.S. jail before being returned to Russia in a prisoner swap, was [appointed](#) a member of Russia's Civic Chamber by President Vladimir Putin on Friday.

Yaroshenko, who was arrested in Liberia in 2010 and extradited to the United States on drug charges, was convicted of cocaine smuggling and sentenced to 20 years in a U.S. jail. He has always denied the charges against him.

In April, Yaroshenko was swapped in a prisoner exchange for the former U.S. Marine Trevor Reed, who was jailed in Russia for alleged violence against a police officer.

In a decree published on the Kremlin's website, Putin appointed Yaroshenko to the 168-member Civic Chamber, a civil society group that has consultative powers in its work monitoring government agencies and examining draft legislation.

The chamber also oversees the Public Monitoring Commission, which exists to document violations within Russia's prison system.

Putin's decree describes Yaroshenko as a "human rights activist," while his biography on the Civic Chamber website says that the pilot had been "[repeatedly tortured](#)" by the U.S. authorities while in jail.

Yaroshenko [said](#) that as a Civic Chamber member he planned to work on securing the release of other Russians jailed abroad.

"I have many adherents abroad that want to join forces to oppose the lying propaganda machine that illegally convicts and persecutes Russian and other citizens who disagree with U.S. and Western policies," he said.

Related article: [Russia Swaps Ex-U.S. Marine Reed for Pilot Yaroshenko](#)

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