

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2017

Prosecutor General Oleg Kamshylov
Sevastopolskaya Street 21
Simferopol, Ukraine, 295015

Dear Prosecutor General Kamshylov,

The trial of Mykola Semena, a prominent Crimean journalist who contributes to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) Ukrainian service is scheduled to begin on March 20, 2017. Mr. Semena is charged with public incitement to undermine Russian territorial integrity via mass media, after he wrote an article expressing the view that the Crimea should be returned to Ukraine. We believe these charges are part of a concerted effort by Russian and Russian-backed authorities to clamp down on independent media, and are writing to call for Semena to be allowed to work freely and for his immediate release.

Mr. Semena has worked and lived as a journalist in Crimea since 1991. He was one of the only independent journalists to remain on the peninsula following Russia's March 2014 forcible and illegal annexation of Crimea and has continued to courageously provide an independent press to residents of Crimea. He is currently under a court order from occupying Russian officials that bars him from leaving Crimea and forces him to seek permission before traveling outside the region, despite his requests to travel to Kyiv for urgently needed medical care.

As members of the U.S. Congress, we have vowed to promote and protect international human rights norms on freedom of expression and freedom of the press. We add our voice to that of the European Union (EU), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to express our deep concern over the Semena case.

We strongly urge you to drop all charges against Mr. Semena, and allow him to leave the Crimean peninsula to seek medical treatment in Ukraine.

Sincerely,



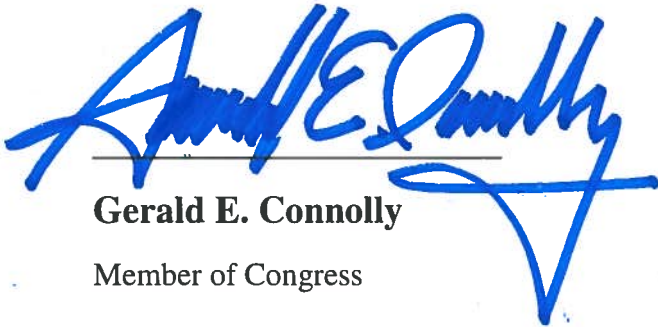
Adam B. Schiff

Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle

Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly

Member of Congress



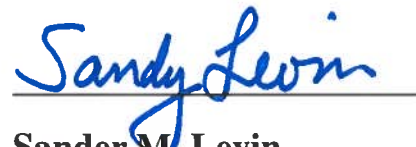
Marcy Kaptur

Member of Congress



William R. Keating

Member of Congress



Sander M. Levin

Member of Congress



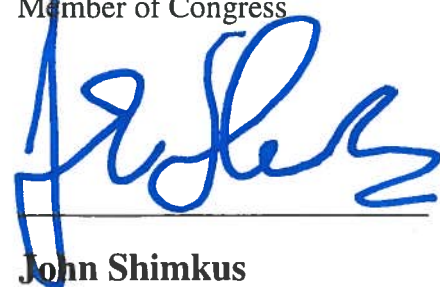
Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Member of Congress



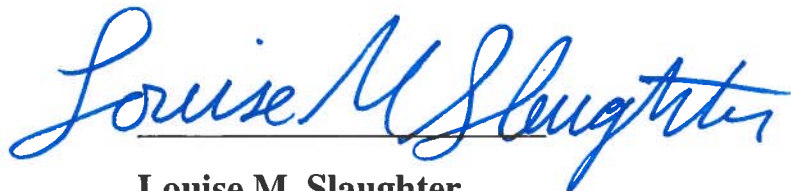
Mark Pocan

Member of Congress



John Shimkus

Member of Congress



Louise M. Slaughter

Member of Congress