

15 November 2023

Dear Iryna Danylovych,

I am writing from my comfortable home in Australia. You are, I understand, in a prison camp in the vicinity of Stavropol in the Russian Caucasus. You and I are unlikely ever to meet, but I would like to let you know that there are thousands upon thousand of people who, like me, are outraged by the treatment you have received at the hands of the Russian state, concerned for your physical welfare, and look forward to the day when you will regain your freedom. On behalf of these many thousands, I would like to applaud you for the courage you, a lone woman, have shown in standing up against a regime that has never hesitated to use brute force – and a compliant judicial system – to silence its opponents.

Just recently I have heard that you have suffered a stroke while in prison. It is hard not to link this disturbing news with the cynical refusal of the prison authorities to provide you with the medical care you require.

The Crimea is at present under Russian occupation, and I fear there is little prospect that the occupation will end soon. If it is of any consolation to you in these dark days, please know that you have an army of well-wishers across the globe.

Sincerely yours,

John Coetzee