

ACAT (Harrow) - prayer case of the month (*November 2022*)

Please pray as you feel led for journalist, author and filmmaker **Vladimir Kara-Murza**, an opposition activist who has been detained in Russia since April on charges of ‘high treason’ for speaking out against the war in Ukraine. If convicted, he faces a 20-year prison sentence.



**Vladimir Kara-Murza**, who holds Russian and British citizenship, is a former pupil of the **John Lyon School in Harrow**. He went on to study History at the University of Cambridge. Since returning to Russia, he has been a candidate for the Russian Parliament and served as deputy leader of the *People’s Freedom Party*. He is also a coordinator of the *Open Russia Foundation*, an organisation which was created with the aim of promoting civil society and democracy in Russia.

At the time of his arrest, he was one of few prominent opposition figures who had chosen to stay in Russia. Many have fled for their safety since the outbreak of the war. Just prior to his detention, he appeared on CNN where he described the Kremlin as a “regime of murderers”.

In 2015 and 2017, he fell into two separate comas in Moscow after displaying symptoms that doctors said were consistent with poisoning. A close friend of the former opposition leader, Boris Nemtsov, who was shot and killed in 2015, **Vladimir Kara-Murza** nearly died from kidney failure in the first incident. He said the alleged poisonings were in retaliation for his lobbying efforts to impose US and EU sanctions against Russian officials accused of human rights abuses. He was subsequently branded a foreign agent in Russia, a restrictive label used to designate what authorities deem to be foreign-funded organisations and individuals.

In October, he was awarded the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize by the *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*. His wife said “she couldn’t be prouder of him” and *Amnesty International’s* Director for Europe and Central Asia stated: “**Vladimir Kara-Murza** is a man of courage and conviction who believes that human rights and dignity should prevail over fear. His brave, tireless work has ensured that more people in Russia share these values. Yet in fighting this just cause, he has paid the price of his own freedom.”

Updates: IRAN: Give thanks that Christian convert and house church leader **Naser Navard Gol-Tapeh** (our prayer case for December 2021) has just been released halfway through a 10 year sentence. Please pray for him as he adjusts to life outside prison.

PAKISTAN: Shagufta Kausar and Shafqat Emmanuel (Prayer case November 2019) , still not safe in Pakistan despite their acquittal and release, have been granted asylum in an undisclosed European country.