

Gerasimov Sergei Yermagenovich,
Director of the Federal Penitentiary Service of the Altai krai
Email: ufsin.ak@gmail.com

Dear Director Yermagenovich,

I am deeply concerned by the unjust imprisonment and alleged ill-treatment of a RusNews journalist **Maria Ponomarenko**. Since her arrest in 2022 there have been multiple reports of her ill-treatment and arbitrary punishment in custody in IK-6 (Shipunovo) and SIZO-1 and SIZO-2 in Barnaul.

Maria suffers from claustrophobia and other mental health conditions and cannot safely be placed in solitary confinement. During her previous placement in a punishment cell her mental health deteriorated, and she attempted suicide. She went on hunger strike after being placed in solitary confinement to protest her undignified treatment by the prison authorities. This ill-treatment by the prison authorities under your control puts Maria Ponomarenko's health, both physical and mental, as well as her life at risk. It violates her human rights and I'm concerned this is being carried out as a form of reprisal for her expressing her anti-war views.

I urge you to release Maria Ponomarenko immediately and unconditionally. In the meantime, I request that you use your existing powers to ensure that the ill-treatment of Maria Ponomarenko is immediately stopped and that her treatment in any prison institution, as well as while in transit between them, complies with international law and standards.

Yours Sincerely,

CC: Russian Embassy in the United States
Ambassador Anatoly I. Antonov
2650 Wisconsin Avenue, NW,
Washington DC 20007

Email: rusembusa@mid.ru [opens in a new tab](#)

Salutation: Dear Ambassador Anatoly I. Antonov