

## **COALITION OF NATIONAL CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS LEADERS JOIN GLOBAL CALL FOR COMPASSION FOR BRITTNEY GRINER**

*The distinguished group of leaders re-affirmed their support for Brittney and the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to secure her release from Russia*

WASHINGTON, DC (August 4, 2022) Today as the legal proceedings against Brittney Griner concluded in Russia a coalition of American civil and human rights leaders expressed their support for Brittney Griner and the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to secure her release and the release of Paul Whelan, both of whom are wrongfully detained in Russia. The leaders join the global call for compassion and Brittney's immediate release along with Paul Whelan, both of whom have been classified by the United States Government as wrongfully detained in Russia.

The coalition includes (in alphabetical order): **Melanie Campbell, President/CEO National Coalition on Black Civic Participation; Leah D. Daughtry, Co-Convenor Power Rising; Jotaka Eaddy, Convenor Win With Black Women; Fatima Goss Graves President and CEO National Women's Law Center; Damon Hewitt, President and Executive Director Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Derrick Johnson, NAACP President and CEO; Joni Madison, Interim President of the Human Rights Campaign; Marc Morial, The National Urban League; Janai Nelson, President and Director-Counsel Legal Defense Fund; Christian F. Nunes, President National Organization for Women; Rashad Robinson, President Color of Change; Reverend Al Sharpton, Founder National Action Network; Shaunna Thomas, Co-Founder and Executive Director UltraViolet; Maya Wiley, President and CEO Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.** Last month these leaders also signed on to a letter the Biden-Harris Administration urging an increase in efforts to get Brittney home swiftly and safely.

“While not unexpected, the sentence issued today by the Russian court was inhumane and extreme. As she did again today, Brittney has taken responsibility for her actions on multiple occasions. She has made clear that she did not intend to break any Russian laws, and as humans do, she made an honest mistake. Brittney also eloquently apologized to her UMMC teammates with whom she had hoped to have a winning season.

“Throughout her wrongful detention in Russia, Brittney has shown courage, incredible strength, and integrity, just as she has throughout her career serving the United States Olympic team, the WNBA, Euroleague teams and the communities which she has been part of.

“We join the global call for compassion for Brittney, and, as she said herself, put politics aside. Our coalition continues to stand together in support of Brittney and the Biden-Harris Administration's ongoing efforts to secure her release and the release of Paul Whelan. We join their families, friends and loved ones in praying for their safe return home swiftly and safely.”

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