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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 31, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
The United States Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

It came to my attention that Swiss courts recently approved their government's plan to send millions of dollars in frozen funds back to Russians with close ties to the Putin regime. These funds – totaling \$230 million dollars – were uncovered as being fraudulent by the late Sergei Magnitsky before he was assassinated for exposing the corruption.

In an apparent twist of irony, two of the three individuals who will receive the funds from Switzerland are designated under the Magnitsky sanctions program, which is the preeminent tool of the United States government for addressing corruption and gross violations of human rights, for their role in Mr. Magnitsky's torture and murder. The two individuals, Vladlen Stepanov and Dmitry Kluyev, are also sanctioned by the UK, Canada, and Australia.

Denis Katsyv, the third individual who will receive the funds, is the son of a senior Russian official and paid a settlement of \$6 million to the U.S. Department of Justice to dispose of the investigation into his role in the Magnitsky case in 2017. Another €3 million of his assets are currently frozen in the Netherlands while he is being investigated for the same crime.

As we enter the twelfth month of Putin's brutal invasion of Ukraine, we have made every effort to sanction Russian officials and oligarchs connected to his war effort. We have also worked with our allies to get them to do the same. Switzerland's decision to return ill-gotten gains to the perpetrators of an emblematic crime of Putin's regime represents an affront to our efforts.

I urge you to raise this issue immediately with Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis and demand reassurances that these funds won't be returned to Russia. Furthermore, I request that the State Department initiate a review of our mutual legal assistance treaty with the Swiss government to determine if it should be downgraded. The U.S. should not reward the clear bad faith witnessed in this case and many other cases connected to Russian money laundering in Switzerland.

Sincerely,

  
ROGER F. WICKER  
United States Senator