



## AI Group 48 Portland, Oregon

September 2025 Newsletter

Next Meeting August 14th On Zoom



**“Kindness is the most  
important thing.”  
Tena Hoke**

*Group 48 is remembering  
the life and legacy of  
longtime group member  
Tena Hoke, who has  
recently passed. Please  
see the articles on pages  
3-4 and plan to join us on  
October 26th as we  
celebrate her life.*

## Urgent Action: China Artist Detained for One Year Without Trial

Name and Pronoun: Gao Zhen (he/him/his)

Chinese artist and U.S. permanent resident Gao Zhen was first detained in August 2024 for “slandering heroes and martyrs.” His wife and child, who traveled with him to China, have also a de facto travel ban since his arrest. No artist or individual should be punished solely for their creative work or for expressing their personal views; Chinese authorities must release Gao Zhen immediately and unconditionally and lift all extra-legal restrictions on his wife and child, allowing them to leave the country freely and safely.

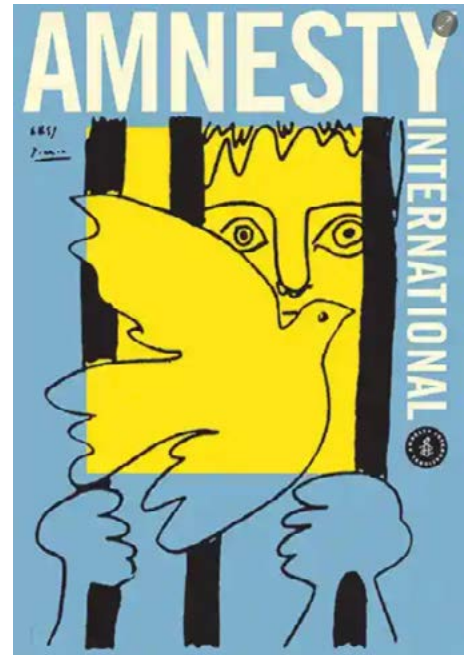
Gao Zhen, 69 years old, is a prominent artist in contemporary Chinese art and a member of the renowned Gao Brothers duo. On August 26, 2024, Gao was detained while traveling in China with his wife and son. Around 30 police officers raided his studio in Yanjiao, a town in Sanhe City, Hebei province. The authorities photographed his artworks, confiscated and sealed several sculptures – most of which were created over a decade ago – before sealing the studio.

The following day, Gao’s wife was informed by the Sanhe City Public Security Bureau of his detention. He has since been held at the Sanhe City Detention Center on charges of “slandering China’s heroes and martyrs,” a crime punishable by up to three years in prison. Reliable sources report that this case has already been processed by the prosecutor’s office and submitted to the court.

In addition, from early May to late July 2025, Gao’s family has been unable to receive any correspondence from him. This suggests that his legally protected right to communicate with his family has been unjustly restricted or denied.

His wife and young child have also suffered. Gao’s wife is banned from leaving the country under the pretext of “national security,” though no formal charges have been filed. Their 7-year-old son, a U.S. citizen, has the legal right to leave the country but is in practice unable to do so without being accompanied, ideally by his parents. The de facto travel ban has kept him out of school for a full year.

Since the 1980s, the Gao Brothers have employed satirical humor to shed light on the atrocities of the Cultural Revolution, consistently challenging the limits of social commentary. Their work offers a sharp critique of the Cultural Revolution and former Chinese leader, Mao Ze-



Graphics used are either in the public domain or from Amnesty International

dong, exposing the extent of the authoritarian practices employed during Mao's regime. These subjects remain deeply sensitive and taboo in China.

### Sample Letter

*Dear Secretary Ma,*

*I am writing to express my grave concern for artist Gao Zhen, who has been detained at Sanhe City Detention Center on charges of 'slandering China's heroes and martyrs' for almost one year without trial.*

*I fear that Gao Zhen's case reflects the ongoing criminalization of freedom of artistic expression and creation using vague charges such as 'slandering China's heroes and martyrs'. Restricting forms of expression with the only interest of protecting the 'honor' or reputation of public officials, institutions, symbols, or flags exceeds what is allowed under international law.*

*My distress is heightened by concerns that Gao's wife and young son have been banned from leaving the country, purportedly under the pretext of "national security," though no formal charges have been filed or documentation provided to justify these measures. As a result, the 7-year-old boy has been unable to continue his education for a full school year.*

*I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Gao Zhen;*

- Pending his release, ensure that Gao's right to communicate with his family is fully respected and protected, and he is not subject to torture or other ill-treatment;*

- Stop harassing and threatening his family and allow them to leave the country freely and safely.*

*Yours sincerely,*



### TAKE ACTION:

Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter provided as a guide or use your own words.

Click [here](#) to report your action(s) on Second UA 106.24. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

#### Secretary Ma Xiaojie

Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission

No. 17 Dingsheng East Street

Sanhe City, Langfang

Hebei Province, 065200

People's Republic of China

Send a copy of your letter to the address below

CC: Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States

Ambassador Xie Fang

3505 International Place, NW

Washington DC 20008

Email: [chinaembpress.us@mfa.gov.cn](mailto:chinaembpress.us@mfa.gov.cn)

Please take action as soon as possible until December 30th, 2025





## In Memory of Tena Hoke

by Bev Hearth and Max White

We are sad to report that long-time Group 48 member, Tena Hoke, died on August 11.

Tena moved to Portland in 1983 and soon after joined Group 48. She was an active member for all these years. Tena served as the Group Coordinator, Area Coordinator, Membership Coordinator, and Treasurer. She tabled at many Group 48 and Community events over the years including International Women's Day, Saturday Market, concerts, festivals, Peace and Justice Fair, book signings, conferences, guest speaker events and more. Tena helped to coordinate the annual Group 48 Run which served as a fundraising event, the Human Rights Film Festival, and numerous other events.

Tena had been the Case Coordinator on many cases over the years. Most recently, she had focused on Prisoners of Conscience in Iran including imprisoned 2023 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Narges Mohammadi and Sharifeh Mohammadi – a Human Rights activist recently re-sentenced to death.

As Amnesty is a letter-writing based organization, Tena took part in many Amnesty Write-A-Thons, wrote on many Urgent Actions each month, and had a personal tradition of writing the number of letters equivalent to her “new” age for her birthday each year.

Tena was known for her compassion, intelligence, generosity, reliability, persistence, availability, tolerance, ethics, honesty, curiosity, patience and kindness. She often said that kindness is the most important thing.

Tena didn't give up. She wrote untold letters for Leonard Peltier, Aung San Suu Kyi, and many others.

She had a big heart. She had a good heart. She

kept her commitments.

Tena was great at developing an “elevator speech” to explain what Amnesty International was all about (very useful at tabling events) or for specific cases or actions. She could organize and present the

information simply and effectively to get her point across in an engaging and concise way, without ever being offensive, drawing people in.

Tena was a good listener. She had a genuine interest in people and their points of view. If someone disagreed with her, she was more likely to ask them to explain their perspective than to press her own.

She wanted to learn what and how other people thought – where they came from. She was a consensus builder.

Tena was disciplined. She never ate the whole bag of chips—she would read the bag's label, then count out the number of chips, crackers, or Cheetos in a serving into a bowl and make them last the whole afternoon. She could eat just one piece of candy. She could eat just one cookie – unless it was a

cardamom cookie. Tena loved cardamom. She might have two cardamom cookies.

Tena was a reader, a researcher, an analyzer, an experimenter. She was a lifelong learner and believed in instilling the values and rewards of education, curiosity, and community involvement in the lives of children that she had influence over, including her nephews and nieces, the kids she read to while volunteering for SMART (Start Making A Reader Today), and her dry grandchildren (“dry,” in China, refers to relatives you don't share blood with).

Tena embodied DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) long before it was a buzz-term. She em-



braced people from many walks of life. Starting at least as early as college, Tena had friends of many races and religions and had an easy exchange of concepts and philosophies with them, and understood shared and unique struggles. One friend and co-worker from India remarked that he had never in his life met anyone like Tena – someone who cared so deeply about someone on the other side of the world.

At a recent writing event at the downtown library, group members witnessed Tena welcome folks from Portland's street community. She graciously invited them over, gave them her Amnesty "elevator speech" to explain what was going on, and invited them to join the letter-writing activities and share in the food provided.

If you attended a Social Justice event in Portland, you were likely to bump into Tena. She showed up to every Peace March, Women's March, protest, demonstration, film, or event that she could whether sponsored by Amnesty or one of the many other Portland peace-based organizations she aligned with.

Even on vacation in the Orkney Islands a few weeks ago, Tena attended the weekly local Amnesty protest against the violence in Gaza (she was interviewed and appeared on the Orkney News website with an eloquent statement). She had been attending weekly "Stop Starving Gaza" demonstrations at 4pm on Fridays in Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square.

Tena's moral compass never wavered. She was a great role model for other members of the group. She never hesitated to provide support, either by advice or requested attendance at any event related to social justice. She showed up for people and she engaged. She expressed her appreciation to others doing "the work."

"Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible." -- The Dalai Lama

"Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind."  
– Henry James

"Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see." – Mark Twain



*Tena Hoke and Cornelia Cerf*

We will miss Tena and the value she added to Group 48. She inspired us and we admired her. In the words of Maya Angelou, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." We will never forget Tena.

--Bev Hearth and Max White

### **Please join us in celebrating the life of Tena Hoke**

Our dear Tena Hoke has died. We will all miss her conscientious and kind presence in Amnesty meetings and in solidarity for many other groups she valued and participated in. In honor of her memory, I ask that as many Amnesty members in Group 48 who knew Tena and could join our group for a tradition that Tena did every birthday. PLEASE mark your calendars for Sunday, Oct 26th (Tena's Birthday). Every birthday, Tena wrote letters.... lots of letters, depending on her age. This Oct 26th, she would have been 66 years old. She would have kept her tradition by writing 66 letters to be sent around the world in solidarity with those Amnesty International identified as needing support, comfort, and advocacy.

PLEASE join us for a potluck on that Sunday afternoon, at the home of Marty Fromer and Mary Jo Cook, 4662 SW Flower Place at 12 pm. Bring stamps, return address labels and your pens. We will have cards and addresses for your letter writing. This would honor the memory of Tena and possibly become an annual activity for those of us who respected and loved our friend and fellow activist, Tena.

--Dale Oller

## Israel/OPT: States Must Act Now to Halt Israel's Military Takeover of Gaza City as Famine Officially Declared

August 22, 2025 Responding to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification's official declaration of famine in Gaza City today, Amnesty International's Senior Director for Research, Advocacy, Policy and Campaigns, Erika Guevara Rosas, said:

"Today's official declaration of famine is a devastating confirmation of what humanitarian and human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, have been warning of for months, and a scathing indictment of the failure of states to press Israel into ending its genocide in the occupied Gaza Strip. This famine is the direct consequence of Israel's deliberate campaign of starvation in Gaza.

"It is all the more harrowing that this famine is an entirely man-made, deliberately orchestrated and preventable catastrophe. The deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid, the destruction of life-sustaining infrastructure, and the direct killings of civilians are a clear manifestation of how Israel is inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Palestinians in Gaza as part of its ongoing genocide.

"The declaration of famine in Gaza City comes as the Israeli cabinet and Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu have approved plans for a new military operation to 'take control' of the city, further entrenching Israel's unlawful occupation. Launching such an offensive amidst an ongoing famine would not only

lead to yet more mass violations of international humanitarian law, but would also deliberately, exponentially intensify the suffering of Palestinians already enduring starvation and rising death tolls from malnutrition.

"With every hour that passes without decisive international action, more Palestinian lives are lost, and Gaza City edges closer to complete annihilation. History will never forgive us for standing by as emaciated children die, while food remains just miles away, yet blocked by Israel.

"To even begin reversing the devastating consequences of Israel's inhumane policies and actions, the world must take action now. All states and actors must forcefully

demand that Israel ends this abomination by ensuring the unimpeded flow of aid into and across Gaza, a total lifting of Israel's illegal blockade, dismantling the deadly militarized aid distribution system and allowing the UN and other trusted humanitarian organizations to distribute aid safely and without arbitrary restrictions. They must also press for an immediate sustained ceasefire by all parties and the rapid return of the hostages held in Gaza as well as of all Palestinians arbitrarily detained by Israel."



### Group Coordinators

Marty Fromer and Terrie Rodello

Treasurer -- Tena Hoke

Newsletter -- Daniel Webb

OR Area Coordinator -- Marty Fromer

Indonesia actions -- Max White

China / Uyghur actions -- Marty Fromer

Iran POC -- Tena Hoke

### Concert Tabling -- Will Ware

Central Africa/ Oregon State Death

Penalty Abolition-- Terrie Rodello

Postage Rates: Within the United States

**\$0.78** - Domestic Letter up to 1oz,  
standard envelope size

**\$0.61** - Domestic Postcard

International Postage

**\$1.70** - Up to 1 oz





## Urgent Action: Equatorial Guinea

### Release Detained Human Rights Defender

NAME AND PRONOUN: Joaquín Elo Ayeto (he/his/him)

On August 13, 2024, Equatorial Guinean human rights defender, Joaquín Elo Ayeto, was transferred to Oveng Azem prison after being accused of illegal activities connected to the civil society platform, Somos+, which he is a member of and which the authorities claim is not legally registered. Since then, no one has heard from him. Also of concern is that at the time of his arrest, Joaquín Elo Ayeto, according to his family, was suffering from both malaria and typhoid fever. The Equatorial Guinean authorities must grant Joaquín Elo Ayeto access to his family, lawyer, and the healthcare he requires, and immediately release him as his arbitrary detention stems solely from his work as a human rights defender.

Joaquín Elo Ayeto is a member of the opposition political party Convergence for Social Democracy (Convergencia Para la Democracia Social), (CPDS) and a member of the coordination body for Somos+, a civil society platform established in 2015 which carries out human rights work.

On August 1, 2024, he was arrested by members of the Gendarmerie who forcibly entered his house and took him away. He was taken to the Malabo gendarmerie station known as la Luna and on August 9, 2024, transferred to Malabo Black Beach prison.

Joaquín Elo Ayeto's arrest took place a few days after he, with some other representatives from Annobon island, visited the French embassy in Malabo. The purpose of the meeting was to reinforce cooperation between the embassy and the human rights platform Somos+. Somos+ was working to expose the human rights violations that were taking place on the Annobon island following the demonstrations of its inhabitants against the impact of some mining dynamite explosions taking place.

### Sample Letter

*His Excellency,*

*I am writing to raise deep concern for arbitrarily detained human rights defender, Joaquín Elo Ayeto, known as Paysa, who has not been seen or heard from in over a year.*

*Since his transfer to Oveng Azem prison, on August 13, 2024, Joaquín Elo Ayeto has been held in incom-*

*municado detention with his family left not knowing if he is dead or alive. A couple of months ago, a relative traveled almost 400 kilometers to see Joaquín Elo Ayeto but was denied entry on arrival and told Oveng Azem prisoners are not allowed visitors. The denial of access of prisoners to their families and lawyers is a violation under international law.*

*Joaquín Elo Ayeto has been detained several times in connection with his work as a human rights defender. His detention is arbitrary and in violation of Article 13 of Equatorial Guinea's constitution as well as the country's international human rights obligations, namely the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association.*

*I urge you to ensure the immediate release of Joaquín Elo Ayeto as he is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights. Pending his release, I call on you to ensure that Joaquín Elo Ayeto is granted immediate access to his family, lawyers, and all necessary healthcare.*

*Yours sincerely,*

### TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- Click [here](#) to report your action(s) on Second UA 75.24. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

**Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo**

President of Equatorial Guinea

Palacio Presidencial de Guinea Ecuatorial

Avenida de Libertad,

Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

X/Twitter: @teonguema (Vice President)

Send a copy of your letter to:

CC: Embassy of Equatorial Guinea in the U.S.

His Excellency Dr. Crisantos Obama Ondo

2020 16th St NW

Washington, DC 20009

Email: [info@egembassydc.com](mailto:info@egembassydc.com) OR secre-

[tary@egembassydc.com](mailto:tary@egembassydc.com)

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS  
POSSIBLE UNTIL: February 20, 2026



## **Amnesty International Statement on Ruling to Allow “Alligator Alcatraz” to Stay Open**

September 5, 2025 In response to a ruling by a federal appeals court blocking a previous order shutting down “Alligator Alcatraz”, Amy Fischer, Amnesty International USA’s Director for Refugee and Migrant Rights said:

“This ruling is a setback for human rights. “Alligator Alcatraz” is a monument to cruelty and just one of the latest expansions of the Trump administration’s racist, anti-immigrant agenda. “Alligator Alcatraz” should have never existed and since its opening, we’ve been advocating for it to be shut down.

“Beyond the environmental concerns brought in the lawsuit, this facility, carried out in coordination with the state of Florida, is a human rights disaster. The people who have been caged there have gone through hell. Within weeks of starting to detain people, horror stories emerged about dangerous and inhumane conditions including maggot-infested food, overflowing toilets and no working showers, lack of medical care, and virtually no access to lawyers. These conditions are not isolated failures — they are part and parcel of the system designed for cruelty and meant to dehumanize our immigrant friends and neighbors.

“Florida taxpayers are footing the bill for this despicable detention center to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. That money could be going to disaster preparedness or other programs to keep Florida’s communities safe and healthy.

“This federal-state relationship sets a dangerous precedent that invites other states to potentially collaborate with the Trump administration in expand-

ing the reach of his cruel agenda. We’ve already seen this with the likes of “Louisiana Lockup” and “Cornhusker clink” in Nebraska. The very nicknames given to these facilities trivialize the suffering of people who are caught up in President Trump’s cruel agenda. Governors in these states must stop being a player in President Trump’s cruel games.

“Like the rest of President Trump’s anti-immigrant agenda, expanding immigrant detention centers is a solution in search of a problem. These facilities are as expensive as they are cruel, and do absolutely nothing to keep our communities safe. Our immigrant family members, friends, and neighbors, many of whom came to the U.S. seeking safety and dignity, make our communities stronger and more vibrant. The U.S. government should be meeting them with compassion and support instead of terrorizing entire communities, tearing families apart, and locking them in cages.

“Immigration detention in the U.S. has long been plagued by systemic abuse and a failure to uphold human rights. But President Trump has doubled down and made it his mission to demonize and attack immigrants – he has made cruelty the point. But, he’s out of touch. Recent polling shows that an increasing number of Americans believe his deportation machine has gone too far.

“This ruling is a setback, but we will not stop fighting until the mass detention and deportation machine is dismantled, and immigrants are treated with dignity and respect.”



## Urgent Action: United States • Release Diabetic at Risk

Timofei Kocheshkov (He/Him/His)

In May 2024, Timofei Kocheshkov, a Russian man seeking safety, was detained while entering the USA with a CBP One appointment. He is currently being held at Folkston Detention Center in Georgia state. Timofei lives with Type 1 Diabetes and is dependent on receiving insulin three times a day and ongoing medical care. Despite numerous requests for medication, medical records from Russia, and his deteriorating health, Timofei has been deprived of proper medical care. We demand Timofei's immediate release from detention to ensure he receives adequate healthcare to prevent him from continued decline and possible death.

Timofei Kocheshkov, age 21 is a Russian national who fled Russia seeking political asylum with his older brother and parents in 2024. Timofei and his older brother Vadim entered the U.S. in May 2024 through California. Despite entering with a CBP One appointment, they were immediately detained and were sent to Imperial Regional Detention Facility in Calexico, California. In the fall of 2024 Timofei and Vadim were transferred to Folkston Detention Center in Folkston, Georgia. Their parents remain in detention in Arizona.

Timofei was diagnosed with Diabetes at five years old. Since his transfer to Folkston, Timofei has not received adequate glucose monitoring, insulin, or food which have dramatically impacted his health. Timofei has seen medical staff at Folkston and detailed in his affidavit and incident reports that he was misdiagnosed, given the wrong type of insulin despite repeatedly asking for the correct medication, doses, and glucose monitoring. In his written statement seeking help, Timofei says, "Every time I ask

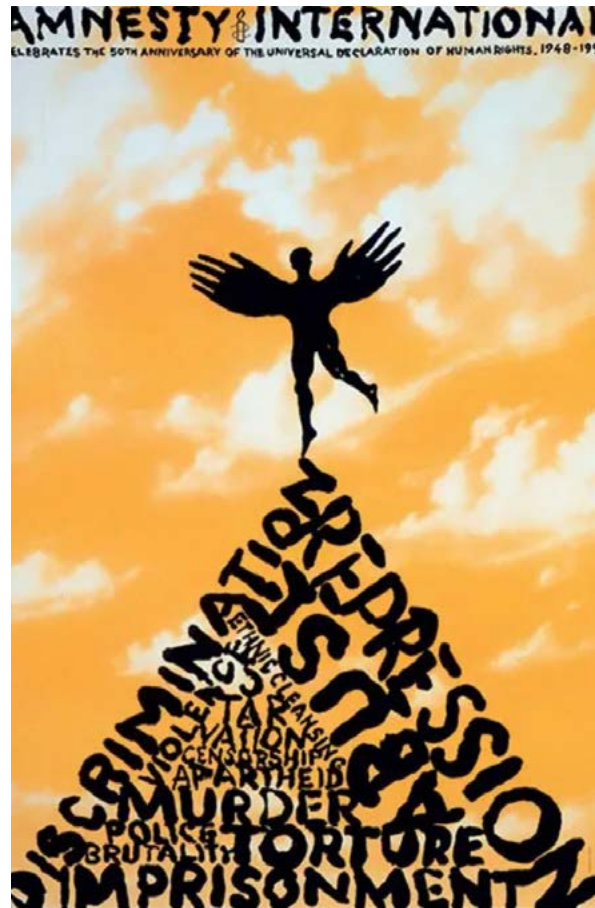
for medical help, I have to wait weeks to see a doctor. Doctors have told me that they cannot treat me properly in here. My life every day is closer to hell. My limbs might be amputated; I may fall into a coma and die." Timofei's older brother shared, "I don't know how to encourage him anymore — every day it is breaking him down both mentally and physically."

Complaints against the treatment of people detained at the Folkston Detention Center led to a visit by DHS's inspector general's office in November 2021. The investigators spent two days at the facility interviewing staff and individuals detained there and reviewing facility operations and medical records of the foreign nationals. Their report released to Congress found numerous abuses "that compromised the health, safety, and rights of detainees."

In April 2024, Jaspal Singh, a 57-year-old man, suffered chest pain and eventually died after a doctor delayed treatment. The facility's medical care "deviated beyond safe limits

and directly contributed to his death," according to the review of his death conducted by ICE.

The GEO Group was just awarded a \$47 million contract to turn a private prison in Georgia into an expanded immigration detention facility. The result will be a nearly 3,000-bed complex, making it the largest immigrant detention center in the U.S. Broadly, the U.S. has seen a 40% increase (from June 2024 to June 2025) of people in ICE detention, currently an average of 56,000 people per day, the highest in U.S. history. The recent passage of the 2025 Reconciliation Bill, otherwise known as Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill" has expanded ICE's budget to \$150 billion of





taxpayer dollars to carry out its mass detention and deportation plan. It is crucial to ensure that facilities where human rights are being violated are held accountable and detained individuals are released from detention to receive the medical care they need to survive.

Sample letter:

*Dear Acting Field Office Director Kristen Sullivan, On May 12, 2024, Timofei Kocheshkov (A#: 249-137-576), a Russian citizen seeking political asylum in the U.S., was detained despite arriving to the border with a CBP One appointment. He was sent to Imperial Regional Detention Facility in Calexico, California. In the fall of 2024, Timofei was transferred to Folkston Detention Center in Folkston, Georgia.*

*Timofei was diagnosed with Diabetes at five years old. Since his transfer to Folkston, Timofei has not received adequate glucose monitoring, insulin, or food which have dramatically impacted his health.*

*Timofei is now experiencing complications that require urgent and consistent medical care that he can only adequately receive outside of detention. Without proper care Timofei is at risk of serious medical complications resulting from his underlying chronic illness, including amputation of limbs, falling into a coma, and death.*

*The dangerous and inadequate conditions at Folkston Detention Center have been well documented by numerous organizations that detail the standard medical care, unsanitary conditions, abuse, and mistreatment that has led to preventable deaths in custody.*

*Timofei is in urgent need of medical care, and his condition is worsening every day. I implore you to use your prosecutorial discretion to immediately and unconditionally release Timofei so that he can access the urgent medical care he desperately needs.*

*Sincerely,*



#### TAKE ACTION:

Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.

Click [here](#) to report your action(s) on UA 84.25. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

#### Kristen Sullivan

ICE Atlanta Acting Field Office Director  
Email: [Kristen.sullivan@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:Kristen.sullivan@ice.dhs.gov)

Please take action as soon as possible until  
February 1, 2026