

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW.
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Roger D. Carstens
Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

June 4, 2024

Dear President Biden, Secretary Blinken, and Special Presidential Envoy Carstens:

As you know, Tigran Gambaryan, a U.S. citizen and former federal agent, is being wrongfully detained by the Nigerian government. Mr. Gambaryan's background is impressive and distinguished. He served at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for over ten years before joining the world's largest crypto exchange, Binance, where he is the Head of Financial Crime Compliance.

During his tenure as an IRS agent, he successfully led some of the most prolific cyber investigations in U.S. history, seizing \$4.725 billion in illicit funds for the U.S. government. Mr. Gambaryan's legacy of dedication to justice and the law continued even after he left federal service. On May 3rd of this year, while Tigran fought for his life inside a prison cell designed to hold ISIS combatants, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a [press release](#) announcing a historic seizure, thanking former Special Agent Tigran for his groundbreaking work in the investigation.¹

On February 26, Mr. Gambaryan traveled to Nigeria at the invitation of the Nigerian government for high-level meetings regarding Binance's compliance issues within the country. After two rounds of meetings, which were described as starting professional and then becoming increasingly hostile, the Government of Nigeria took Mr. Gambaryan hostage.

Armed guards escorted him to his hotel room, where he was forced to surrender his passport. After packing his belongings, he was taken to a Nigerian government-owned house, referred to as the "Guest House." For five days, Mr. Gambaryan was held hostage without the ability to inform his family, attorneys, or the U.S. State Department of his situation. On March 12, a court order that had been obtained by the Nigerian authorities to hold him for 14 days expired. On March 20, the Chief Court 1 of the Magistrate Court of the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja,

¹ U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California. "BTC-e Operator Pleads Guilty to Money Laundering Conspiracy." U.S. Department of Justice, May 29, 2024. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndca/pr/btc-e-operator-pleads-guilty-money-laundering-conspiracy>.

Nigeria) stated that "the remand order has not been extended." Still, it adjourned the matter to April 5 for a ruling. From March 12 to April 5, there was no Nigerian legal basis for the continued detention of Mr. Gambaryan.

Subsequently, the Government of Nigeria charged him with several crimes as an effigy of his employer, and he was transferred to the notorious Kuje Prison, known for its harsh conditions. The government has admitted openly in court that Tigran is being tried in lieu of pursuing legal action against his employer. On April 24th, the Nigerian government pleaded with the judge to deny bail, stating, "*The 1st defendant (Binance) is operating virtually. The only thing we have to hold on to is this defendant (Tigran). So, we pray, My Lord, to refuse bail to the defendant.*"

Mr. Gambaryan's detainment has been marked by excessive and harsh treatment. Further, he is not permitted to meet with his legal team without the presence of government officials and armed guards. It is crucial to emphasize that the charges against Mr. Gambaryan are baseless and constitute a coercion tactic by the Nigerian government to extort his employer, Binance. Following these charges, Mr. Gambaryan qualifies as a "U.S. Citizen wrongfully detained by a foreign government," as defined in the "Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act."

The recent developments in Mr. Gambaryan's case are deeply disturbing. He had a court hearing scheduled for May 22, and as the court came to order, he was absent. The court, prosecutors, and defense team were unaware of his whereabouts or condition. When the court contacted prison authorities to determine Mr. Gambaryan's whereabouts, they received no response, and the hearing was postponed. The next day, on May 23, the court reconvened, and he was present. He was in the back of the room, slumped over in his chair. When the judge called for Mr. Gambaryan to step forward, he could not stand on his own and ultimately collapsed to the floor. It has since been reported that he tested positive for malaria, and when he requested hospital treatment, the prison officials declined his request. It was not until Mr. Gambaryan collapsed in court that the judge was compelled to order that he be sent to a private hospital for proper treatment. However, as of June 4, the prison has not fully complied with the court order and has not ensured Mr. Gambaryan has received adequate health care.

Clearly, Mr. Gambaryan is a U.S. citizen being wrongfully detained by the Government of Nigeria per 22 U.S.C. 1741 (a)(9) and (10). On behalf of Mr. Gambaryan, his family, and concerned Americans, we, the undersigned, urgently request and strongly encourage the transfer of his case to the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs. Mr. Gambaryan's health and well-being are in danger, and we fear for his life. Immediate action is essential to ensure his safety and preserve his life. We must act swiftly before it is too late.

Sincerely,



Rich McCormick, MD, MBA
Member of Congress



Michael T. McCaul
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs
Committee



Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



Austin Scott
Member of Congress



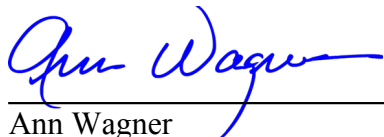
Randy K. Weber, Sr.
Member of Congress



Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress



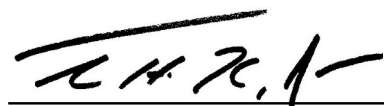
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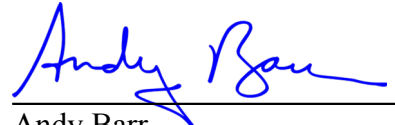
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