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May 14, 2019

The Right Honorable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

I write regarding Enes Kanter, a Turkish national and professional basketball player for my hometown Portland Trail Blazers of the National Basketball Association (NBA). I ask your government to facilitate Mr. Kanter's safe passage to and from Canada should the Portland Trail Blazers play the Toronto Raptors in Toronto, Canada, in the upcoming NBA Finals. I also urge your government to state publicly that it will not comply with any Interpol red notice meant to interfere with Mr. Kanter's livelihood and to intimidate him and his family back in Turkey.

Since being drafted into the NBA in 2011, Mr. Kanter has used his public platform to criticize Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. President Erdogan responded by revoking Mr. Kanter's passport in punishment and accusing him of supporting terrorists; he also shamelessly asked Interpol to issue a red notice, threatening Mr. Kanter's freedom should he venture outside the United States. As a result, Mr. Kanter did not travel to Canada for an NBA game in March 2019. If the Portland Trail Blazers and the Toronto Raptors both reach the NBA finals, Mr. Kanter will again have to consider the security risks associated with work-related travel outside the U.S.

As President Erdogan continues taking Turkey down a dark, authoritarian road, Mr. Kanter is hardly the only person to face persecution. But without his Turkish passport—and not yet able to qualify for an American passport—Mr. Kanter does find himself in a particularly tenuous legal position resulting from being a public person using his bully pulpit to speak out against a dangerous bully.

I have instructed my staff to work with our administration to ensure that Mr. Kanter could travel safely to Canada and return unimpeded in the event of a Portland-Toronto NBA series. I urge your government to ensure the same with respect to Mr. Kanter's ability to enter Canada, play in Canada, and then return safely and expeditiously to the United States. I also urge you to state publicly that your government will ignore any red notice against Mr. Kanter.

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Doing so would send a strong message to President Erdogan and any other government that seeks to use international organizations to silence critics or settle political scores.

With deep and abiding respect for the U.S.-Canada relationship and the close ties between our countries and our peoples,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Wyden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" and last name "Wyden" clearly distinguishable.

Ron Wyden
United States Senator