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## ARKADI GONTMAKHER THANKS HIS SUPPORTERS

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On February 18, 2011, American citizen Arkadi Gontmakher, a Bellevue, Washington resident, was reunited with his family after over three years of unlawful imprisonment in Russia. Mr. Gontmakher has safely returned to the United States. He, his wife, and two sons wish to express their sincere gratitude for the constant support he received while he was imprisoned. The Gontmakher family especially thanks the United States Helsinki Commission, his Congressional representatives and advocates, the Department of State – including the Embassy officials in Russia and the human rights and American citizen advocates in Washington, D.C., the NCSJ (an advocacy group on behalf of Jews in the former Soviet Union), the law firm of Patton Boggs, and their friends and family. It is only through this continuous support that Mr. Gontmakher believes he was able to survive.

At this time, the Gontmakhers wish to focus on family time and restoring Mr. Gontmakher's health, which deteriorated while he was in prison. Mr. Gontmakher is relieved to finally receive the urgent medical care he needs to address his heart condition. Again, the family extends its heartfelt appreciation for everyone's efforts in highlighting the severe human rights and humanitarian problems that plagued Mr. Gontmakher's far-too-extended time in Russian custody.

*February 22, 2011*

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