

Why and How to Write Letters to Political Prisoners

A political prisoner refers to an individual imprisoned or otherwise restricted in their rights and freedoms on account of their views or actions that are deemed political. The occupiers persecute Ukrainian citizens on religious grounds, for their work in journalism and human rights advocacy, as well as for anti-war statements. They fabricate cases related to sabotage, terrorism, extremism, and espionage.

Your Letter Is:

- A sign of remembrance — a message that the political prisoner is not forgotten, that people care about them and follow their fate.
- A human rights signal to the prison administration, reminding them that the prisoner is under public scrutiny and that any abuses will be noticed and documented.
- A source of support for fellow citizens who are detained.

What to Include in Your Letter?

Make it personal – introduce yourself and explain why you are writing to this specific person.

Find common ground – if you share any interests or experiences, start with those.

Express support – reassure the political prisoner that they are not forgotten and that people are waiting for their return.

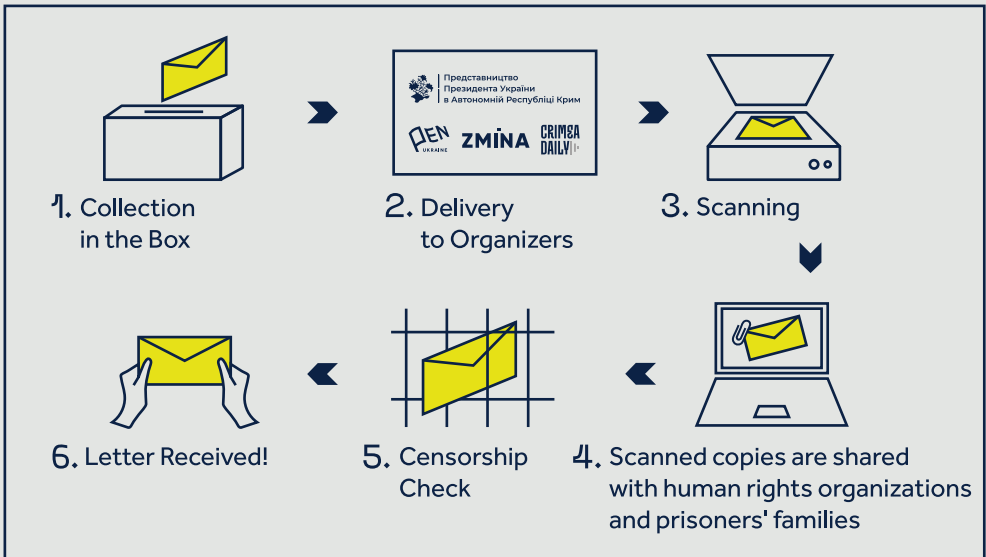
Share the outside world – describe what is happening around you and in the world: films, books, travel, nature, or even your work—these details can be engaging and uplifting.

Write with emotion – bring your stories to life with vivid descriptions and feelings, as such elements are scarce behind bars.

Ensure clarity – write legibly with clear ink to make it easy to read.

Write the addressee's name and the writing date at the beginning of the letter.

How a Letter Reaches Its Recipient



Your letter will pass prison censorship by following these six **DON'Ts**:

- 1.** Don't include political slogans; maintain political neutrality.
- 2.** Don't discuss the prisoner's case, as it may cause harm.
- 3.** Don't use codes, obscure symbols, or abbreviations.
- 4.** Don't use profanity or insults.
- 5.** Don't encourage escape or illegal actions, even as a joke.
- 6.** Don't speak disrespectfully about the authorities involved in the detention.

Important Note:

- Write in Russian: If the censor does not understand something, your letter will not reach the addressee.