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## **EPAM LAW WELCOMES THE RELEASE OF AMERICAN STEPHEN HUBBARD**

**(MOSCOW, RUSSIA) – President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin has pardoned Stephen Hubbard, a 74 year old American citizen. Mr. Hubbard was released from a Russian penal colony and is returning to the United States today. U.S. law firm Boies Schiller Flexner LLP (BSF) engaged EPAM Law in early 2025 to take up the representation of Mr. Hubbard. The two firms had earlier represented Marc Fogel, an American teacher Russia released in February 2025.**

Mr. Hubbard, a retired English teacher, was taken into custody in 2022. For more than two years, his family did not know where he was and could not contact him.

EPAM lawyers found Mr. Hubbard, helped arrange humanitarian assistance and represented him in the Russian courts, including on his parole application.

EPAM handled the case pro bono for humanitarian reasons, including Mr. Hubbard's age, his health and his long separation from his family.

Mr. Hubbard has been a member of the Christian Orthodox Church for more than four decades. His son, Father Joseph Coleman, is a Christian Orthodox priest in Cyprus.

“We thank President Putin for making our client's release possible”, Mr. Afanasiev said. “I also thank my EPAM colleagues Andrey Bastrakov and Gleb Koch and the entire BSF team, for their dedication to our client throughout his long journey home. As Father Joseph Coleman said, 'there are wonderful blessings to be found along the hard road to peace’”.

### **The full text of the letter from the son of Stephen Hubbard.**

#### **"WHEN MERCY CROSSES BORDERS: A SON'S GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION**

By Father Joseph Coleman  
Metropolis of Tamassos and Orinis  
Church of Cyprus

*For many years, I have prayed for something most people take for granted: the opportunity to see my father again. My father Stephen James Hubbard was taken into Russian custody in April 2022 in the Ukrainian city of Izyum. Our family has since endured the sorrow and uncertainty of separation.*

*Today, we give thanks for his freedom. As my father journeys home, my heart is filled with gratitude for the mercy shown to him. I sincerely thank President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin for their attention to his case and the diplomatic efforts that secured his release.*

*I write not as a political commentator, but as a son and an Orthodox priest. Through these difficult years, prayer and trust in God's mercy have sustained our family and today we can attest that there are blessings along the hard road to peace.*

*I serve in the Orthodox Church of Cyprus under His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah of Tamassos and Orinis. Yet my spiritual journey has a Russian connection that predates my priesthood. Many*

*years ago, while visiting my father in Japan, he took me to a Russian Orthodox church. The beauty of the Divine Liturgy, the reverence of the worshippers, and the continuity of the ancient Christian faith awakened something within me and lead me to Orthodoxy.*

*It moves me deeply that the father who introduced me to Russian Orthodoxy has now been released through an act of mercy involving Russia.*

*My affection for the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian people is neither recent nor political. It comes from a spiritual conviction, personal experience, and friendships across borders. Metropolitan Isaiah himself received part of his theological formation in Moscow and has a profound appreciation for Russian Orthodox spirituality.*

*Orthodox Christianity teaches that every person is created in the image and likeness of God. That truth calls us to see the human being before the nationality and to choose compassion where bitterness might otherwise prevail. Mercy does not erase differences or deny suffering. It recognizes that no person is beyond our concern.*

*Our Lord tells us, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." These words speak to presidents and patriarchs as surely as they speak to ordinary families. For us, mercy is no longer an abstract teaching. It means an elderly father is being given the chance to return to those who love him.*

*I am grateful to President Trump and his administration for their efforts on my father's behalf, and to President Putin for his part in this humanitarian outcome. I also thank the dedicated lawyers at Boies Schiller Flexner (BSF) in the United States and Egorov Puginsky Afanasiev & Partners (EPAM) in Russia. Their perseverance and professional assistance have meant so much to our family. We are grateful as well to everyone who worked quietly, without recognition, toward this day.*

*There is a larger Christian lesson here: Mercy is not weakness, nor does compassion require the abandonment of conviction.*

*The Orthodox tradition gives us countless examples of saints who placed reconciliation above resentment, forgiveness above revenge, and love above the divisions of their times. Saint Seraphim of Sarov greeted those around him with the words, "My joy, Christ is risen!"; His greeting reminds us that Christian hope is not confined by the troubles of this world.*

*Offering mercy in difficult circumstances is an expression of moral strength. As an American by birth and an Orthodox priest serving in Cyprus, I believe affection for one nation need not diminish affection for another. Our shared Christian inheritance reminds us of bonds deeper than political divisions.*

*My father's release cannot resolve the disagreements between nations. But it changes the world for one family and reminds us that compassion can find a way even in troubled times.*

*I pray for every family separated by war or imprisonment, for all who suffer, and for those entrusted with difficult decisions. May the mercy shown to my father encourage further acts of humanity and reconciliation.*

*As I await the blessing of embracing him again, I receive his freedom not as a political victory, but as a gift of mercy. To Presidents Trump and Putin, our lawyers, and all who helped bring him home, I offer heartfelt thanks.*

*Glory to God for all things. May God grant peace to a troubled world."*