

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Temporary Release Requested for Business Leader Falsely Imprisoned in Kuwait

*Crowell & Moring attorneys for international business executive file Application for Interim Measures claiming violation of international law by Kuwaiti courts*

**Washington – March 28, 2019:** Crowell & Moring LLP, counsel for Marsha Lazareva, a prominent member of the business community in the Middle East, has filed a request for her temporary release from the Kuwaiti prison where she has been held for the past year.

The request—formally called an Application for Interim Measures—claims that Kuwaiti officials have been holding Lazareva in violation of international law and calls for her immediate release pending the resolution of her ongoing arbitration proceedings. Lazareva, a Russian citizen and former U.S. Green Card holder, and her 5-year-old son, an American citizen, have been unable to return to the U.S. from Kuwait while his mother remains incarcerated.

This latest development stems from a Notice of Arbitration that Ms. Lazareva’s legal team filed against Kuwait in July 2018. The original notice claims that the charges against Lazareva are part of a coordinated campaign by Kuwaiti government officials and others to damage her reputation as a successful business leader and diminish the value of her investments. It also notes that her prosecution began with vague, unsubstantiated charges and escalated to improper travel bans, harassment and improper detention in abject conditions. Lazareva was convicted in a show trial based on the testimony of a single witness who relied on forged documents. The court issued its verdict without warning or allowing her lawyers to present a defense.

This new filing builds on the July 2018 Notice by requesting that Ms. Lazareva be released on bail pending the outcome of her arbitration proceedings. It also comes on the heels of an appeal for her release made by Neil Bush, former U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson, former Congressman Ed Royce, and former FBI Director Louis Freeh. The delegation went to Kuwait to formally request that Ms. Lazareva be released pending her appeal.

“Very regrettably, the continued prosecution of Ms. Lazareva has deteriorated from a criminal case where her due process has been repeatedly denied, to a serious human rights matter, highlighted by her imprisonment on charges where the relevant facts have been disproven, and key evidence used to convict her has proven to be forged,” said former FBI director Louis Freeh, a member of the delegation working towards Lazareva’s release. “Due process and fundamental fairness demand that the Kuwaiti government grant Marsha’s immediate, temporary release while her international arbitration plays out.”

As Vice Chairman and Managing Director of KGL Investment (KGLI), Marsha Lazareva was the only foreign woman serving as the head of an investment company in Kuwait. In her capacity at KGLI, Lazareva managed the creation of an investment property called The Port Fund, whose investors included the Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) and the Kuwait Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS).

Over its ten-year investment period, The Port Fund grew its original investment of \$188 million to \$380 million. In 2017, it was in the process of distributing returns to its limited partners and creditors, including the KPA and PIFSS, when \$496 million in funds were frozen in a Dubai bank. Those funds were finally released in February 2019, after a protracted and expensive legal battle, at which time the Port Fund’s creditors, investors, and stakeholders were paid the respective monies due them. However, following two subsequent hearings, a Kuwait court continues to refuse Lazareva’s release.

In November 2017, Lazareva was arrested and detained for questioning on the orders of the Kuwaiti General Prosecutor's office. After being held in poor conditions for over two months, she was temporarily released as part of a \$33 million bail agreement, only to be imprisoned again three months later.

[Click here to read the filing.](#)

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**Contact:**    **Anthony Hoglebe**  
Marathon Strategies  
+1 732.841.2823  
[anthony@marathonstrategies.com](mailto:anthony@marathonstrategies.com)