

I would like to thank many people. My doctors, nurses and hospital staff for doing all they can for me. The British police who are pursuing my case with vigour and professionalism and are watching over me and my family.

I would like to thank the British government for taking me under their care. I am honoured to be a British citizen. I would like to thank the British public for their messages of support and for the interest they have shown in my plight.

I thank my wife Marina, who has stood by me. My love for her and for our son knows no bounds.

But as I lie here, I can distinctly hear the beatings of wings of the angel of death. I may be able to give him the slip, but I have to say my legs do not run as fast as I would like.

I think, therefore, that this may be the time to say one or two things to the person responsible for my present illness.

You may succeed in silencing me, but that silence comes at a price. You have shown yourself to be as barbaric and ruthless as your most hostile critics have claimed. You have shown yourself to have no respect for life, liberty or any civilised value. You have shown yourself to be unworthy of your office, to be unworthy of the trust of civilised men and women.

You may succeed in silencing one man. But a howl of protest from around the world will reverberate, Mr Putin, in your ears for the rest of your life.

May God forgive you for what you have done, not only to me, but to beloved Russia and its people.