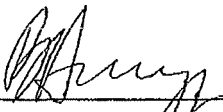
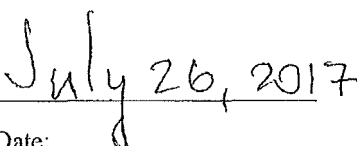


Statement of Mr. VLADIMIR ASHURKOV

1. My name is Vladimir Ashurkov and I am a Russian national currently residing in London, UK, where I was granted political asylum in 2015. I am freely and voluntarily providing this statement. I resided in Moscow, Russia up until April 2014 when my wife, Alexandrina Markvo, and I fled Russia due to our political persecution. After a falsified, politically motivated criminal case was opened against me in Russia and an arrest warrant in my respect was issued, I have applied for political asylum in the UK and received it in 2015.
2. I worked as a finance professional in Russia and currently serve as the executive director of the Anti-Corruption Foundation, a Russian non-profit led by Alexei Navalny, a friend and a prominent Russian opposition leader. Similar to me, Alexei has faced politically motivated charges and trials ordered by Russian authorities. In addition, I am a senior member of Navalny's Progress Party, which has repeatedly been illegally refused registration by the Russian Ministry of Justice.
3. Shortly after I fled Russia, I was accused of embezzlement stemming from the fundraising efforts I led for Navalny's 2013 grassroots campaign to become mayor of Moscow. Two of my colleagues were also accused in the same case, one of them spent one year under house arrest, and they are still under a travel ban (cannot leave Moscow). No victim of the alleged crime was ever identified, and no trial is in sight. I ultimately applied for asylum in the UK to protect myself from extradition to Russia based on these fabricated embezzlement charges.
4. Around May of 2012, as part of my role in assisting Alexei Navalny and our Anti-Corruption Foundation, I coordinated with GF Life and its bank, Bank24.ru, the launch and issuance of a bank card that would benefit the foundation. This partnership grew out of a speech Mr. Navalny made at LIFE's employee conference in April 2012. This was a project approved by both me and Alexei Navalny that would be marketed to our supporters via social media. I worked closely with Slava Solodkiy who handled marketing initiatives for LIFE and coordinated Mr. Navalny's review and approval of the project and its launch. Under this partnership, LIFE via Bank24.ru would provide transfer of 1% of card charges on the branded cards to the foundation.
5. The "Navalny Card" project offered our civil and anti-corruption efforts a potentially significant funding source. Further, it would permit us to make in-roads in raising funds from businesses and corporations, many of which were reluctant to support our cause for fear of retaliation from the Putin Administration.
6. The initial public reaction to the Navalny Card was extremely positive and we received a significant number of card applications within days. The announcement of the card project became a media event with significant coverage, including questions as to which bank would be issuing the card as Bank24.ru's role was not publicly revealed at that date.
7. Unfortunately, the immediate success of the Navalny Card became the subject of investigation by the Russian security services which investigated the identity of the issuing bank. Our on-line campaign was also hindered by government hacker attacks.

8. Within days of the card announcement, a prominent opposition blog revealed LIFE's involvement in the project via Bank24.ru. This was followed with a more detailed report in GQ Magazine identifying LIFE as the card issuing party (<http://www.gq.ru/lifestyle/kto-stoit-za-kartochkoj-navalnogo>).
9. On the day the GQ Magazine story broke, I was in contact with Slava at LIFE. He subsequently advised me that LIFE's owners and managers had received calls from government agencies threatening them with bank sanctions if they continued to proceed with issuing the Navalny Card. Slava advised me that LIFE had no choice but to stop the project or risk its shareholders and customers' assets to government seizure. LIFE publicly denied its involvement in the card issuing project that evening under mounting government pressure.
10. This outcome was a setback to Mr. Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation but was not surprising giving the Putin Administration's history of stifling the political opposition, including the illegal seizure of banks and businesses assets. Despite this setback, an opportunity emerged where we could potentially issue the Navalny Card through the National Reserve Bank (NRB). A few weeks after LIFE withdrew, I called Slava at LIFE to ask if they would be willing to provide us with all of the card's roll-out materials, including the applicant database. LIFE provided us all of the materials at no cost and I immediately began working with NRB on the issuance of the card.
11. Similar to the LIFE situation, NRB came under threats and attacks from the banking authorities once it became public that they plan to issue the Navalny Card. Ultimately, NRB succumbed to the threats and also withdrew from the project.
12. LIFE under the leadership of Sergey Leontiev, Alexander Zheleznyak and Slava Solodky took a political risk in helping Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation. Based on my personal experience as well as my work with Alexei Navalny, I can state that anyone or any company that is viewed by the Russian authorities as supporting the opposition cause is almost guaranteed to suffer, if not facing the risk of elimination through various means available to the Russian Government. These actions include illegal seizures of assets and false charges of embezzlement similar to those LIFE and its owners faced after it became public that they were partnering with us on the Navalny Card. This is unfortunate for Russian democracy but is the reality under the regime of Vladimir Putin. It is very possible that the arrests, false charges and the seizure of the banking group which happened in respect of LIFE, its executives, and its members was a result of their attempt to help Alexei Navalny and Anti-Corruption foundation in its absolutely legal civil work.
13. I am competent in English, provide this declaration voluntarily and attest to its truthfulness.


VLADIMIR ASHURKOV


Date: