

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 353/90 - Death Penalty - Fear of Imminent Execution 7 September 1990

USSR:
 S.A. Akimov
 S.S. Botnar
 V.N. Burlenko
 S.S. Volozhanin
 I.V. Gorbunov
 V.V. Grabovsky

Amnesty International fears that the above six men face imminent execution after their petitions for clemency were rejected by the USSR Supreme Soviet at the end of July. The organization is appealing to President Gorbachov to exercise his constitutional authority to grant clemency and to commute the death sentences passed on S.A. Akimov, S.S. Botnar, V.N. Burlenko, S.S. Volozhanin, I.V. Gorbunov and V.V. Grabovsky.

News of the rejection of their clemency petition was carried by TASS, the Soviet press agency, on 31 July 1990. Amnesty International has now obtained a copy of the report giving details of names and charges. All six men were convicted of murder: S.A. Akimov by the Supreme Court of the Tatar Autonomous Republic, S.S. Botnar by the Supreme Court of the Moldovan Republic, S.V. Volozhanin by Kemerovo Regional Court in the Russian Republic, I.V. Gorbunov and V.N. Burlenko by Donetsk Regional Court in the Ukrainian Republic and V.V. Grabovsky by the Odessa Regional Court, also in the Ukraine.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and without reservation on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is particularly concerned that the authorities have rejected these petitions for clemency when they are considering proposals to restrict greatly the scope of the death penalty.

Since the authorities announced in 1987 that they were planning to restrict the use of the death penalty Amnesty International has learned of only 19 commutations. At least 146 people have been sentenced to death and 19 executed. The real totals, however, are probably much higher. Statistics on the death penalty have been secret since 1934. The President of the USSR has the authority to commute any death sentence to one of imprisonment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams, express letters, air letters:

- appealing for clemency on behalf of S.A. Akimov, S.S. Botnar, V.N. Burlenko, S.V. Volozhanin, I.V. Gorbunov and V.V. Grabovsky and for their sentences to be commuted;
- urging a stay on all executions on the grounds that the death penalty is a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- welcoming the proposed restrictions on the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

The President of the USSR Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachov:

SSSR
Moskva
Kreml
Prezidentu Gorbachovu M.S.

Telegrams: SSSR, Moskva, Kreml, Presidentu Gorbachovu M.S.

COPIES TO:

The Chair of the Clemency Commission of the USSR Supreme Soviet Aleksandr Golyakov:

SSSR
Moskva
Komissiya po voprosam pomilovaniya pri
Verkhovnom sovete SSSR
Predsedatelyu Golyakovu A.

The Minister of Justice of the USSR Veniamin Yakovlev

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The Chair of the Supreme Court of the USSR Yevgeny Smolentsev:

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Verkhovny sud SSSR
Predsedatelyu Smolentsevu Ye.

The Chair of the Commission on Legislation Yury Khamzatovich Kalmykov

SSSR
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Komitet po voprosam zakonodatelstva
pri Verkhovnom Sovete SSSR
Predsedatelyu Kalymkovu Yu. Kh.

The General Director of the TASS press agency Leonid Petrovich Kravchenko

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Generalnomu direktoru Kravchenko L.P.

and to diplomatic representatives of the USSR in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Please check with the International Secretariat, or

your section office, if sending appeals after 12 October 1990.