

URGENT ACTION

DROP TERROR CHARGES AGAINST UKRAINIAN ACTIVISTS

Film director Oleg Sentsov and ecologist Aleksandr Kolchenko are on trial in a military court in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. They are Ukrainian citizens and residents of Crimea who opposed its Russian annexation. The excessive charges of terrorism on allegations of property destruction and recurring torture allegations give rise to fair trial concerns.

Oleg Sentsov is accused of having set up a terrorist group and having committed terrorist acts in April 2014 shortly after the Russian occupation and annexation of Crimea. He could face a life sentence. **Aleksandr Kolchenko** is accused of being a member of the group and of having committed a terrorist act. He could face a maximum sentence of 20 years. The prosecution accused the two men of having set fire to the offices of the United Russia Party, which at the time were the offices of the Ukrainian Party of the Regions (the party of ousted President Viktor Yanukovich), destroying the kitchen of the building. They are also accused of attempting to blow up the Lenin statue and the Eternal Flame monument in the Crimean capital Simferopol. Both men deny all charges.

There are serious concerns regarding the two men's rights to a fair trial. Oleg Sentsov has complained that he was tortured when detained by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), as has one of the prosecution's witnesses against the two men. Oleg Sentsov and Aleksandr Kolchenko were denied access to their Russian lawyers for more than four days after their transfer from Crimea to Moscow. The trial is being held before a military court, in a remote city in southern Russia, and in a room which is not large enough to accommodate all those wishing to attend. Trial monitors, including Amnesty International's representative, are forced to rotate for short shifts.

The main evidence for the prosecution are the statements of three witnesses. However, two of them, Aleksei Chirny and Gennady Afanasiyev, who have already been sentenced to seven years each in connection with the case, have both refused to testify in court. Aleksei Chirny referred to his right not to testify against himself. His lawyer had earlier alleged that his client had been ill-treated and promised a lighter sentence if he pleaded guilty and incriminated others. The lawyer was removed from the case. Gennady Afanasiyev refused to testify on 31 July on the grounds that he had been forced into making incriminating statements. A third witness is a police informant who provided fake explosives to blow up the Lenin statute and the Eternal Flame monument.

Please write immediately in Russian or your own language:

- Call on the authorities to withdraw the terrorism-related charges against the two men and present them with appropriate charges or release them;
- Insisting that all allegations of torture and other ill-treatment by the defendants, witnesses and their lawyers are immediately, effectively and impartially investigated;
- Urging them to ensure the physical and mental safety of both defendants and the witnesses in this case.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 SEPTEMBER 2015 TO:

Prosecutor General

Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a
125993 Moscow GSP- 3
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 987 58 41
+7 495 692 17 25

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Director

Aleksandr Vasilievich Bortnikov
Federal Security Service
ul. Bolshaia Lubianka, d.1/3
107031 Moscow
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 914 26 32

Salutation: Dear Director

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Oleg Sentsov and Aleksandr Kolchenko are Ukrainian citizens and were detained by the FSB in the occupied territory of Crimea.

Oleg Sentsov was detained on the night of 10-11 May 2014 at his home. He complained that when he was detained by the FSB officers they tortured him by placing a plastic bag over his head, and suffocating him until he passed out. They threatened him with rape and murder and forced him to confess to organizing explosions, terrorist acts and to possessing illegal firearms.

Aleksandr Kolchenko was detained on 16 May 2014 in the centre of Simferopol, the capital.

They were transferred to Moscow on 23 May along with other Ukrainian detainees from Crimea. Oleg Sentsov and Aleksandr Kolchenko were denied access to their Russian lawyers until 27 and 28 May, respectively four and five days after their transfer to Moscow, in violation of international fair trial standards and Russian law. Both had taken part in peaceful demonstrations opposing the Russian intervention in Crimea, and Oleg Sentsov had taken part in the EuroMaydan demonstrations in Kyiv, Ukraine, as a member of the motorists' protest group "AvtoMaydan".

They deny membership of the Ukrainian right-wing group Pravyi Sektor (Right Sector), of which the prosecution has accused them. Pravy Sektor has also issued a statement that they are not, and have never been, its members.

A November 2014 decision of the Russian Supreme Court which declared four right-wing Ukrainian organizations, including Pravyi Sektor, extremist and made their membership illegal on the territory of the Russian Federation, has specifically referred to this criminal case to justify its decision regarding Pravyi Sektor.

Name: Oleg Sentsov, Aleksandr Kolchenko

Gender: m

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