

URGENT ACTION

LAWYER AT RISK OF BEING STRIPPED OF LICENSE

Russian lawyer Farid Murtazin could be stripped of his advocate status following a complaint from the Investigation Committee. The lawyer denies the allegations and believes that this is an attempt to stop him representing possible prisoner of conscience Artiom Saviolov. The hearing is scheduled for the week starting 19 August.

In June 2013, the Ministry of Justice Department for Tula Region received a complaint from the Russian Investigative Committee against **Farid Murtazin**, a lawyer, member of Tula Region Bar Association. According to the complaint, during the pre-trial investigation stage of the so-called 'Bolotnaya' case, Farid Murtazin, who represents one of the Bolotnaya detainees Artiom Saviolov, repeatedly failed to attend investigative proceedings. The Investigation Committee has also stated that Farid Murtazin took too much time to familiarise himself with the 64 volumes of the criminal case against his client. The Investigative Committee concluded that this was an attempt to drag out the pre-trial investigation and a violation of the client's right to an effective legal representation.

Farid Murtazin denies the allegations. He has pointed out that the Investigative Committee distorted the facts and that on the specified dates he was present at the investigative proceedings. The lawyer has also pointed out that the Investigative Committee provided no evidence to support its allegations. He has also stated that he and his client finished familiarizing themselves with the case files within the timeframes stipulated by the investigation. Moreover, Farid Murtazin attached a statement from his client, Artiom Saviolov, in which the latter insisted that he was happy with his lawyer's work and had no complaints. The hearing of the complaint against Farid Murtazin is scheduled to take place at Tula Region Bar Association in the week starting 19 August.

Please write immediately in Russian or your own language:

- Expressing your concern that the complaint against Farid Murtazin could be an attempt to remove him from the case and might lead to the violation of his client's right to effective legal defence;
- Urging that any complaints against lawyer Farid Murtazin are considered impartially and independently;
- Stressing that the lawyer should be able to discharge his functions without intimidation, hindrance and harassment, as stipulated by the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 AUGUST 2013 TO:

President of Tula Region Bar Association

Vladimir Fedorovich Kalachev
33, Zhukovskogo str.
Tula,
Russian Federation
300041
Fax: +7 4872 36 25 67 (If somebody
replies say "FAX")
Email: toap2007@yandex.ru
**Salutation: Dear President of the Bar
Association**

Head of the Department of the Ministry

of Justice for Tula Region
I.F.Tambovtsev
9, Blagoveschenskaia str.,
Tula
Russian Federation
300041
Fax: +7 4872 56 49 86; +7 4872 30 10
66
Email: ru71@minjust.ru
**Salutation: Dear Head of the
Department**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are regular reports of law enforcement officials subjecting criminal defence lawyers to harassment and pressure to remove or prevent them from working as defence counsels in specific cases. This can include filing unfounded complaints against them and alleging that they violate their client's right to effective legal representation, and thereby seeking to have them stripped of their licences. Over the years, Amnesty International has highlighted this issue, both in the context of the North Caucasus (see its recent report *Russia: Confronting the circle of injustice threats and pressure faced by lawyers in the North Caucasus*, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/003/2013/en>), and elsewhere in the Russian Federation. Thus, for example, in 2007 the Prosecutor General's office complained to the Moscow Bar Association against Karinna Moskalenko, who was at that time representing businessman Mikhail Khodorkovsky, in connection with the first set of charges against him, and requested that she be stripped of her advocate status. The Moscow Bar Association rejected the complaint. In 2005, similar requests were submitted in relation to five other of Khodorkovsky's lawyers. Recently, the Investigative Committee complained against lawyer Violetta Volokova, who represents another Bolotnoya case defendant, Sergei Udaltsov, who is currently under house arrest. The Investigative Committee requested that Violetta Volkova is disciplined for allegedly passing on Sergei Udaltsov's political statement to the media, which may also lead to her being stripped of her licence to practice law.

Following street protests of 6 May 2012, on the eve of Vladimir Putin's inauguration as President, which resulted in skirmishes between some protesters and the police, more than 10 people have been criminally charged in connection with their alleged participation in what the authorities have described as "mass riots". Most have been in detention since June 2012, and only some of them were placed under house arrest or released on bail. Thirteen people are currently standing trial. Amnesty International believes that at least three of them – Vladimir Akimenkov, Artiom Saviolov and Mikhail Kosenko – might be prisoners of conscience detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their beliefs.

Name: Farid Murtazin
Gender m/f: Male

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