

## **Russia: Aleksandr Nikitin faces further persecution**

*The last ditch effort to persecute former prisoner of conscience Aleksandr Nikitin by Russia's Prosecutor General, who will tomorrow appeal to the full Supreme Court to re-open the case, was condemned today by Amnesty International.*

*The Federal Security Service (FSB) which has led the investigation, has continuously violated national and international standards of criminal procedure and appears to be more concerned in obtaining Aleksandr Nikitin's conviction than in establishing truth through fair judicial determination.*

*"Aleksandr Nikitin has been acquitted and proven innocent of espionage. Attempts to re-open the case after a four year investigation and a Supreme Court verdict undermines Russia's judiciary and sends a message to the environmental movement that freedom of expression will not be tolerated," the organization said.*

*The former naval officer was accused in 1996 of leaking state secrets after writing about the environmental consequences of nuclear submarines for Bellona, a Norwegian environmental organization.*

*Amnesty International and the Russian human rights movement have campaigned against the persecution of Aleksandr Nikitin, who was merely exercising his right to freedom of expression.*

*The organization is urging the Supreme Court to throw out the appeal and close the case once and for all.*

*"The FSB wants to re-open a case that should never have been opened in the first place," Amnesty International said. "The FSB appears to be desperate to silence Aleksandr Nikitin and send a message to other activists they should not criticize the government."*

\ENDS

public document

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW web : <http://www.amnesty.org>

