

URGENT ACTION

WIFE EXPRESSES FEAR FOR ANDREI SANNIKAU

Belarusian prisoner of conscience, Andrei Sannikau, met with his wife for the first time in three months on 24 January, when he told her that he had been tortured and that he feared for his life.

Opposition presidential candidate, **Andrei Sannikau** was sentenced to five years in prison on 14 May 2011 for his peaceful participation in post-election demonstrations in Minsk in December 2010. He was allowed to meet with his lawyer on 20 January and his wife, Iryna Khalip, on 24 January. Iryna Khalip reported at a press conference on 25 January that he had looked very thin and unwell, and had told her that from September “the torture started”. Iryna Khalip said that at the end of the meeting he held up a piece of paper saying, “This is a matter of life or death. They can kill me at any time.”

Andrei Sannikau also told his wife that he had been threatened that his four year old son would come to harm. He said that on 20 November he had signed a request for clemency addressed to President Lukashenka under pressure and out of fear that his son would be harmed.

Andrei Sannikau was unable to speak openly to his lawyer or his wife. Before the meeting with his lawyer, both were warned to limit their conversation to his criminal case and appeals. Their meeting was held in the presence of prison personnel and was recorded. Andrei Sannikau was transferred to Vitba-3 prison colony in Vitebsk district on 24 November, after having been subjected to almost two weeks of constant transfer between detention centres. Amnesty International believes that he was subjected to frequent transfers as a way of putting physical and psychological pressure on him to sign a confession.

Many who were sentenced for participating in the demonstrations have been released after they agreed to sign a confession for organizing or taking part in “mass disorder”.

Please write immediately in Russian, Belarusian or your own language:

- Remind the Belarusian authorities that Andrei Sannikau is a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for the peaceful expression of his political views and that he should be released immediately and unconditionally, along with all other prisoners of conscience held in connection with demonstrations in December 2010;
- Remind them that they have a duty to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of those in custody, this includes a duty to protect prisoners from attacks by third parties as well as state agents;
- Call on the authorities to ensure that he is not tortured or ill-treated by state officials or third parties.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 MARCH 2012 TO:

General Prosecutor

Alexander Koniuk
Ul. Internatsionalnaya 22
220050 Minsk,
Belarus
Fax: +375 17 226 42 52

Salutation: Dear General Prosecutor

Minister of Internal Affairs

Anatoly Kuleshov
Ul. Gorodskoi Val 2
220050 Minsk,
Belarus
Fax: +375 17 203 99 18

Salutation: Dear Minister

Acting Chief of the Department of Penitentiary Institutions at the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Sergei Protsenko
Ul. Aranskaya 1
220006 Minsk, Belarus
Fax: +375 17 226 18 06 (say “fax”)

Salutation: Dear Sergei Protsenko

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. This is the third update of UA 299/11. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR49/023/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Opposition presidential candidate Andrei Sannikau was sentenced to five years in prison in May 2011 for taking part in post-election demonstrations. Amnesty International believes that the charges against him, and at least five others, are unfounded, and that they have been targeted for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of assembly and expression.

In September, Andrei Sannikau, and another prisoner of conscience, Zmitser Dashkevich, were subjected to over 10 days of being transported from one prison colony to another. Between 20 and 26 September, Andrei Sannikau's lawyer had not been informed of his client's whereabouts. At a press conference, his wife, Iryna Khalip reported that Andrei Sannikau had been threatened by cellmates in the city of Vitebsk and in the city of Mogilev, who stated "We don't intend to kill you, but.....you may be transferred to another cell, where you may be beaten or even killed. Prisoners kill each other. It happens." He was again subjected to constant transfers in November.

Zmitser Dashkevich is currently in solitary confinement in Penal Colony 13 in Glubokoe in Vitebsk region. He was transferred there on 27 September 2011.

Amnesty International is continuing to ask for the release of the remaining prisoners of conscience who were sentenced in connection with the demonstration in December 2010. The other remaining prisoners are:

Zmitser Bandarenka, sentenced to 2 years on 27 April

Eduard Lobau, sentenced to 4 years on 24 March

Pavel Sevyarynets, sentenced to 3 years on 16 May

Mykalau Statkevich, sentenced to 6 years on 26 May

Name: Andrei Sannikau

Gender: Male

Further information on UA: 299/11 Index: EUR 49/001/2012 Issue Date: 30 January 2012

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