

**PUBLIC**

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To: Health professionals  
From: Medical office / Western CIS sub-regional  
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### ***FURTHER INFORMATION ON MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION***

**(See AI Index: EUR 49/30/99 on 1 December 1999)**

**Professor Yury Bandazhevsky  
BELARUS**

Amnesty International has learned that Professor Yury Bandazhevsky was released on 27 December from pre-trial detention under the condition that he does not leave Minsk. The investigation into his case will continue, and reportedly can take up to 6 months.

AI received reports that Prof Yury Bandazhevsky lost around 20 kilos during his 5½ months in pre-trial detention and the condition of his health has deteriorated. His contract with the Gomel Medical Institute expired in 1999 and was not renewed. After his release he visited the Institute where students and colleagues reportedly welcomed him warmly, but at the same time the newly appointed rector apparently had changed many aspects of the research previously conducted.

Currently Prof Bandazhevsky is in Minsk (circa 250 km from Gomel), awaiting the results of the investigation.

#### **Background**

Prof Yury Bandazhevsky is a medical academic who was rector of the Gomel Medical Institute from 1990 until the end of 1999. He has been active in the research field for a number of years. As a member of a special research committee he had recently written a report about research being conducted into the Chernobyl disaster by the Institute of Radiation Medicine (part of the Belarusian Ministry of Health), criticizing the manner in which the research had been carried out and the fact that money had been spent on research which had not produced any important scientific findings.

Yury Bandazhevsky was arrested in Gomel on 13 July 1999 by police on the basis of a measure usually only used for the arrest of violent suspects and 'terrorists'. The authorities did not formally charge him until 5 August 1999. This breached Article 9 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Belarus is a state party, which requires that: "Anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges brought against him". He was eventually informed that he was charged under Article 169 (3) of the Belarusian Criminal Code for allegedly taking bribes from students seeking admission to his research institute. If he is convicted, he faces between five and 15 years' imprisonment and confiscation of his property.

#### **Recommended Actions**

Amnesty International believes that Yury Bandazhevsky may have been imprisoned for his outspoken criticism of a state-funded research program into the effects of the explosion of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor on the population's health.

Further letters are requested from health professionals to the addresses listed below:

- referring to your earlier letters if appropriate;
- welcoming the release of Prof Yury Bandazhevsky;
- asking the authorities for clarification of the reasons for which Prof Yury Bandazhevsky is charged;
- expressing concerns that he might not receive a fair trial and seeking assurances that all procedures followed will meet international standards for a fair trial.

## ADDRESSES

The President of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka  
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220016 g. Minsk  
ul. Karla Marksa, 38, Administratsia Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus  
Presidentu Lukashenka A.H  
Belarus  
Faxes: + 375 172 22 38 72 / 26 06 10  
Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Yuriy Sivakow  
Respublika Belarus, g. Minsk, Ul. Urytskaha, 5  
Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del Respubliki Belarus, Ministru Sivakowu  
Faxes: + 375 172 26 12 47  
Salutation: Dear Minister

The Procurator General of Belarus, Aleh Bozhelko  
Respublika Belarus, 220050 g. Minsk, Ul. Internatsionalnaya, 22  
Prokuratura Respubliki Belarus  
Generalnomu prokuroru Bozhelku A.  
Faxes: + 375 172 26 41 66  
Salutation: Dear Procurator General

Minister of Health of the Republic of Belarus  
Igor Zelenkevich  
Respublika Belarus  
220010 g. Minsk  
ul. Myasnikava, 39  
Ministerstvo zdravookhraneniya  
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Salutation: Dear Minister