

21 September 1998

Further information on UA 216/97 (EUR 49/07/97, 18 July 1997) and follow-up (EUR 49/01/98, 16 January 1998) - Fear of imminent execution/Death penalty

BELARUSIgor Ganya, aged 34 (_____))
F. Verega (first name not known, __. _____)
Two other people, names not known

Amnesty International has received a reply from the Supreme Court of Belarus which states that on 20 January 1998 the Supreme Court upheld the appeal against the death sentence passed on F. Verega and commuted the sentence to 15 years' imprisonment. The Supreme Court did not uphold Igor Ganya's appeal, and therefore he remains under sentence of death.

Amnesty International is gravely concerned that Igor Ganya will face imminent execution, unless President Alyaksandr Lukashenka grants him clemency. According to reports, on 22 January 1998 President Lukashenka stated that he had only pardoned one person facing the death penalty since he came to power in 1994.

Igor Ganya and F. Verega, both citizens of Moldova, were sentenced to death on 30 June 1997 by the Minsk Regional Court for premeditated, aggravated murder under article 100 of the Belarussian Criminal Code.

Amnesty International has no further information regarding the two individuals, whose names are not known and whose cases were taken up in EUR 49/01/98 (Further information on UA 216/97, 18 July 1997).

Background information:

According to press reports, Belarus's deputy Procurator, General Alyaksandr Ivanowski, stated on 11 August 1998 that 33 people had been executed in Belarus since the beginning of this year (whose sentences were passed in previous years).

According to information broadcast on 11 April 1998 on Belarussian national television, at least 55 prisoners were on death row in the country at the time of the broadcast. At least 13 of these had received their sentences in 1998.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Russian, English or in your own language:

- urging the Clemency Commission and President Lukashenka to grant clemency to Igor Ganya and to all other prisoners at present on death row in Belarus, and to commute their sentences;
- calling for an independent investigation into allegations that both Igor Ganya and F. Verega were forced to confess their guilt under physical duress, for the findings to be made public and for any law enforcement officer found guilty of ill-treatment to be brought to justice in accordance with the norms of international law;
- expressing concern at the very high rate of executions in Belarus in 1998, and urging the Belarussian authorities to declare an official moratorium on executions in view of Belarus's application for membership to the Council of Europe, to demonstrate Belarus's intent to move towards the abolition of the death penalty, a commitment which is required of all states on admission to the Council of Europe;
- calling for official and comprehensive statistics on the application of the death penalty in Belarus to be made public;

- expressing deep sympathy with the victims of violent crime and their families, but pointing out that the death penalty has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishments and is brutalizing to all involved in its application.

A NOTE ON FAXES: If you have difficulty getting through, please keep trying - the telephone system in Belarus is not very reliable. It can help to dial very slowly. If you call out of office hours, the fax might be switched off. If so, please try again when the office is likely to be open (Belarus is +3 hours ahead of GMT). If a person rather than a fax machine answers, repeat "FAX" until you are connected to the fax.

APPEALS TO: (Please mark all appeals "URGENT - SROCHNO")

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

The Head of the Department for Applications for Clemency and Citizenship at the President's Administration, Vladimir Samusev
 Respublika Belarus
 220016 g. Minsk
 ul. Karla Marksa, 38, Administratsia Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus
 Otdel po voprosam pomilovaniya i grazhdanstva
 Zaveduyushchemu otdelom
 Samusevu V.
 BELARUS
Telegrams: Samusevu, Administratsia Prezidenta, Minsk, Belarus
Faxes: + 375 172 22 38 72 or +375 172 26 06 10
Salutation: Dear Mr Samusev

COPIES TO:

The Chairman of the Supreme Court of Belarus, Valentin Sukalo
 Respublika Belarus
 220681 g. Minsk
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The Procurator General of Belarus, Aleh BOZHELKO
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The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, Ivan ANTONOVICH
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and to diplomatic representatives of Belarus accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

*“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”
Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

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