

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 49/06/97

8 July 1997

Further information on UA 266/96 (EUR 49/05/96, 18 November 1996) and follow-up (EUR 49/02/97, 14 March 1997; EUR 49/03/97, 7 May 1997; EUR 49/05/97, 17 June 1997) - Ill-treatment / possible prisoners of conscience

BELARUSGregory Kishko

new name: **Andrey Sheptytskich**

Amnesty International has received information that Gregory Kishko has been released from detention in Belarus pending trial though he is not permitted to leave the country. Gregory Kishko was reportedly beaten by police officers at a demonstration on 23 March 1997 prior to his arrest that day.

According to further information, Andrey Sheptytskich, of Ukrainian nationality has been in detention in Belarus since 26 April. This follows his participation in a demonstration commemorating the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. He is reportedly charged under Article 86, part 3 of the Belarus criminal code: "organization or active participation in group actions which violate public order". The maximum sentence under this article is five years' imprisonment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is concerned regarding the apparent pattern of ill-treatment and imprisonment of members of the opposition as a result of peaceful strikes and demonstrations in Belarus and has repeatedly raised this with the Belorussian authorities.

Human rights organizations report that widespread demonstrations throughout Belarus on 23 March resulted in numerous arrests, detentions and fines. Police officers reportedly arrested 30 people following a protest against plans to send students for their community service to areas of Belarus affected by the Chernobyl nuclear accident. Those arrested reportedly included the elderly and young boys and girls. Reports also state that a 10-year-old boy was detained by police for wearing a red and white bandage around his head which resembled the prohibited former national flag.

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

- calling for the immediate release of any demonstrators held in police custody solely for exercising their right to freedom of assembly;
- seeking assurances that neither Gregory Kishko, Andrey Sheptytskich, nor any other person in the future will be imprisoned solely on the grounds of their political beliefs or for peacefully expressing their right to freedom of assembly;
- urging the authorities to initiate prompt and impartial investigations into all allegations of ill-treatment of demonstrators by the police and to bring to justice anyone found responsible;
- urging the authorities to provide compensation to the victims of police abuse and to make all law enforcement officials aware that torture and ill-treatment

are prohibited in any circumstances under the provisions of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Belarus is a party as a successor state of the USSR.

APPEALS TO:

The President of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka

Respublika Belarus

220010 g. Minsk

pl. Nezavisimosti

Apparat Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus

Prezidentu Respubliki Belarus Lukashenka A.H

BELARUS

Telegrams: Prezidentu Lukashenko, Minsk, Belarus

Faxes: + 375 172 23-58-25

Salutation: Dear President

The Procurator General of Belarus, Aleh Bozhelko

Respublika Belarus

220050 g. Minsk

Ul. Internatsionalnaya, 22

Prokuratura Respubliki Belarus

Generalnomu prokuroru BOZHELKU A.

BELARUS

Telegrams: Generalnomu prokuroru, Minsk, Belaru

Salutation: Dear Procurator General

Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Agolets, first name not known

Respublika Belarus

g. Minsk

Ul. Urytskaha, 5

Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del Respubliki Belarus

Ministru Agoletsu

BELARUS

Telegrams: Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del, Minsk, Belarus

Faxes: +375 172 26-12-47

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, Ivan Antonovich

Respublika Belarus

220030 g.Minsk

Ul. Lenina, 19

Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Respubliki Belarus

Ministru Antonovich I.

BELARUS

Fax: + 375 172 27-45-21

and to diplomatic representatives of Belarus accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 August 1997