

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE FREED

Belarusian prisoner of conscience Andrei Sannikau was released from prison in the northeastern city of Vitebsk on 14 April. He has thanked everyone who showed him support and solidarity.

Opposition presidential candidate **Andrei Sannikau** was sentenced to five years in prison in May 2011 for taking part in post-election demonstrations in December 2010. Amnesty International believes that the charges against him were unfounded, and that he has been targeted for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of assembly and expression. He was released from Vitba-3 prison colony, Vitebsk, on the basis of a presidential pardon, and he is now back at home with his family in Minsk.

Andrei Sannikau was transferred to Vitba-3 prison colony in Vitebsk district on 24 November 2011, 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. In January 2012, Andrei Sannikau told his wife that on 20 November 2011 he had signed a request for clemency addressed to President Lukashenka under pressure and out of fear that their son would be harmed.

Zmitser Bandarenka, Coordinator of European Belarus and a member of Andrei Sannikau's campaign team, who was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in April 2011, has been released from Mahiliou penal colony #15 on 15 April. Amnesty International remains concerned that prisoners of conscience are being pressurized to apply for pardons and will continue to campaign for the remaining prisoners of conscience to be released unconditionally. The remaining prisoners are:

Zmitser Dashkevich, sentenced to two years on 24 March 2011
Eduard Lobau, sentenced to four years on 24 March 2011
Pavel Sevyarynets, sentenced to three years on 16 May 2011
Mykalau Statkevich, sentenced to six years on 26 May 2011

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals. Amnesty International will continue to monitor these cases and take further action as necessary.

This is the fourth update of UA 299/11. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR49/001/2012/en>

Name: Andrei Sannikau
Gender m/f: M

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