

URGENT ACTION

YOUTH LEADER SENTENCED TO A FURTHER YEAR

On 28 August, a court sitting in a closed session in Glubokoe prison colony sentenced Zmitser Dashkevich, a prisoner of conscience in Belarus, to a further year in prison for allegedly violating prison rules.

In July Amnesty International learned that the administration of the prison colony had forwarded **Zmitser Dashkevich's** case to the Investigation Committee of the Republic of Belarus, which consequently decided to open a new criminal case against him under Article 411 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus ("deliberate disobedience to the correctional institution administration"). The court sentenced Zmitser Dashkevich to a further year in prison.

Zmitser Dashkevich has been repeatedly placed in the punishment cell for various minor violations of prison rules; in some cases the prison authorities have reportedly placed him in the punishment cell to protect him from physical attacks by fellow prisoners.

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

- Reminding the Belarusian authorities that Zmitser Dashkevich is a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for the peaceful expression of his human rights and that he should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- Reminding the Belarusian authorities that they have a duty to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of those in custody;
- Calling on the Belarusian authorities to stop the harassment of Zmitser Dashkevich.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 OCTOBER 2012 TO:

General Prosecutor

Alexander Koniuk
Ul. Internatsionalnaya 22
220030 Minsk,
Belarus
Fax: +375 17 226 42 52

Salutation: Dear General Prosecutor

Minister of Internal Affairs

Igor Shunevich
Ul. Gorodskoi Val 4
220030 Minsk,
Belarus
Fax: +375 17 203 99 18

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Chief of the Department of Penitentiary
Institutions at the MIA
Sergei Doroshko
Ul. Vokzalnaya 42
220007 Minsk, Belarus
Fax: +375 17 226 18 06 (say "fax")

Salutation: Dear Sergei Doroshko

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 first update of UA 217/12. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR49/011/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Zmitser Dashkevich is one of four prisoners of conscience currently imprisoned in Belarus in connection with a largely peaceful demonstration on 19 December 2010. Tens of thousands of Belarusians gathered in central Minsk to protest against unfair elections. The demonstration was mostly peaceful, but when a violent incident broke out at the doors of Government House, riot police moved in to disperse the crowds.

Zmitser Dashkevich was sentenced to two years in a labour colony on 24 March 2011 for alleged assault under article 339 (“hooliganism”) on 18 December 2010, the day before the election. Amnesty International believes the charges against him are unfounded and were fabricated in order to prevent him taking part in the demonstration on 19 December 2010. Since his conviction in March 2011, Zmitser Dashkevich has repeatedly been exposed to a pressure from the prison administration. By September 2011, he had been placed in a punishment cell eight times, and he has spent most of his time since then in the punishment cell. Conditions are particularly harsh in such cells: prisoners are not allowed bedding despite the temperature often falling to 15 degrees Celsius during the winter. Prisoners in the punishment cells are also not allowed any visitors or correspondence. In September Zmitser Dashkevich was offered the chance to apply for a Presidential pardon if he admitted his guilt, but he rejected the offer. Zmitser Dashkevich is considered to be a “malignant violator” of the prison rules and he is not allowed to have family visits. The continuing harassment of Zmitser Dashkevich for allegedly violating prison rules appears to be intended to put physical and psychological pressure on him.

The four prisoners of conscience are:

Mykalau Statkevich sentenced to six years on 26 May 2011

Pavel Sevyarynets sentenced to three years on 16 May 2011

Zmitser Dashkevich sentenced to two years on 24 March 2011

Eduard Lobau sentenced to four years on 24 March 2011

Name: Zmitser Dashkevich

Gender m/f: m

Further Information on UA: 217/12 Index: EUR 49/016/2012 Issue Date: 29 August 2012