

URGENT ACTION

SOKOLOV TRIAL IMMINENT

Human rights activist Aleksei Sokolov's trial is now scheduled to begin on 19 January. His detention order has been extended until 9 March.

Aleksei Sokolov was arrested on 13 May 2009. He has been in custody awaiting trial since then; his detention order has been extended several times, by the Leninskii District Court in Yekaterinburg and by Sverdlovsk Regional Court. His lawyers appealed against these decisions, without success.

According to Aleksei Sokolov's lawyers, there have been a series of violations of criminal procedure in the handling of Aleksei Sokolov's case. They fear that he may not receive a fair trial. Amnesty International believes that Aleksei Sokolov may be a prisoner of conscience, detained for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression in the course of his lawful human rights activities.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Russian, English or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to release Aleksei Sokolov on bail;
- Demanding that Aleksei Sokolov is given a fair trial in line with international fair trial standards;
- Urging them to ensure that he is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated while he remains in custody;
- Calling on them to demonstrate respect for the lawful work of human rights defenders, and ensure they are free to pursue their lawful activities without fear of repercussions.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 MARCH 2010 TO:

Sverdlovsk Region Governor

Aleksandr S. Misharin
Ul. Maksima Gorkogo, 21/23
Yekaterinburg
Sverdlovsk Region
620075 Russian Federation
Fax: +7 343 362 15 13
Salutation: Dear Governor

Sverdlovsk Region Prosecutor

Yurii A.Ponomarev
Ul.Moskovskaia, 21
Yekaterinburg
GSP 1036 Sverdlovsk Region
620219 Russian Federation
Fax: +7 343 377 02 41
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor

Prosecutor General

Yurii Ya.Chaika
Ul. Bolshaia Dmitrovka, 15a
Moscow GSP-3
125993 Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 692 17 25
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

And Copies to:

Ombudsperson of the Russian Federation

Vladimir P.Lukin
Ul.Miasnitskaia, 47
Moscow
107048 Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 607 74 70

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fourth update of UA 128/09 (EUR 46/011/2009). Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/011/2009
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/020/2009/en>
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/027/2009/en>
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/eur46/028/2009/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Aleksei Sokolov is the head of the NGO *Pravovaia Osnova* (Legal Basis), which campaigns against torture and other ill-treatment of people held in Russia's prisons and detention centres. He became prominent after he publicized and distributed a film about torture and other ill-treatment in a temporary holding centre in Yekaterinburg called IK-2. The film received wide coverage, both in Russia and internationally, and led to the closure of IK-2. The work of Legal Basis brought about several investigations into police and prison colony staff, accused of crimes including the use of torture to force suspects to "confess."

He was also investigating possible corruption in some Yekaterinburg law-enforcement agencies: some officials, he found, had helped to cover up the impunity in IK-2. In 2008 he learned that several prisoners were being pressured into claiming falsely that he had been involved in crimes including the 2004 robbery, on suspicion of which he has been in custody since 13 May 2009.

While he has been in custody, police have threatened to torture him because of his work in defence of human rights.

When the Sverdlovsk Regional Court ruled on 31 July that he should be released to await trial, the police charged him with theft and kept him in custody. On 20 October, a judge in the Leninskii district court in Yekaterinburg ordered that he be detained until 6 November. On 2 November, another judge ruled that Aleksei Sokolov's case should be transferred to a different district court, and upheld a previous order to detain Aleksei Sokolov until 6 November. On 25 November the Sverdlovsk Regional Court rejected Aleksei Sokolov's appeal and extended his pre-trial detention until 25 December on the grounds of gravity of the charges he is facing. According to one of Aleksei Sokolov's lawyers, the Regional Court's action was unlawful, as no requests to extend Alexei Sokolov's detention had been submitted.

Further information on UA: 128/09 Index: EUR 46/ 001/2010 Issue Date: 18 January 2010

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