

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety/Death threats

21 July 2004

RUSSIAN
FEDERATION

Dmitrii Kraiukhin (m), human rights defender.

Human rights defender Dmitrii Kraiukhin has received numerous death threats in recent months, reportedly in connection with his participation in the trial of a neo-Nazi organization in Orel, western Russia. Amnesty International has grave concerns for his safety and fears that he is in serious and imminent danger.

Dmitrii Kraiukhin is the head of the non-governmental organisation (NGO) "United Europe" which is based in Orel, western Russia. The NGO is particularly well-known for its work to combat racism through opposing the activities of extreme nationalist organizations. In June 2003, Dmitrii Kraiukhin complained to the prosecutor's office in Zavodskii district of Orel about the activities of an organization called Russian National Unity (RNU) in connection with alleged acts of vandalism and the distribution of anti-Semitic material. As a result of his complaint, a criminal case was opened which led to two members of this organization being charged with offences under Article 282 of the Russian Criminal Code "incitement of national, racial or religious enmity" The court case is due to begin in September 2004 with Dmitrii Kraiukhin as the chief witness.

In February 2004, when the investigation was completed, the Zavodskii district prosecutor gave the RNU all the case material, including the contact information of all the case experts and witnesses. Following the receipt of this information, RNU activists began distributing leaflets in Orel and other cities across central Russia accusing Dmitrii Kraiukhin of "heresy" and publicising his home telephone number and address. This has led to him receiving numerous threats.

In April 2004, Dmitrii Kraiukhin requested that the Zavodskii district court provide him with witness protection due to serious fears for his safety. His request was denied. The Zavodskii district prosecutor's office also reportedly refused to open a criminal case into the alleged threats made towards Dmitrii Kraiukhin by the RNU. However, the prosecutor's office in the Sovietskii district of Orel has reportedly opened a criminal case. In contrast to the treatment of Dmitrii Kraiukhin, the other witness in the trial -- who is head of the press service for the regional internal affairs department -- was provided with security after she reported being followed.

In early July 2004, Dmitrii Kraiukhin reportedly received a death threat through the post which included a photocopy of an article from the Russian daily newspaper "*Izvestiya*" concerning the murder of the prominent ethnologist and human rights defender Nikolai Girenko last month. The part of the article which spoke about Nikolai Girenko's planned participation in a trial against RNU activists from Nizhnii Novgorod prior to his murder was highlighted. Reportedly, the same threat was sent to a local police official and editors of three newspapers in the region which have been critical of extreme nationalist organizations.

In recent weeks a photograph and contact details of Dmitrii Kraiukhin have been placed on the website "Slavic Union" (www.demushkin.com) with the caption "Know Your Enemy" emblazoned across the photograph. The website alludes to the court decision to deny Dmitrii Kraiukhin witness protection and encourages its readers to contact him.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Nikolai Girenko -- prominent human rights defender, Professor of Ethnology and expert on racism and discrimination in the Russian Federation -- was shot dead on 19 June 2004 in his home in St Petersburg, aged 64. Nikolai Girenko had conducted several studies for Moscow and St Petersburg authorities on neo-Nazi and skinhead groups and had made expert contributions to a number of high-profile investigations and

court cases concerning alleged racially-motivated attacks. According to reports, Nikolai Girenko and many of the academics working alongside him on research into racism regularly received threats. Days after the murder, a neo-Nazi group called "The Russian Republic" claimed responsibility for the murder. A St Petersburg Prosecutor reportedly stated that the killing may have been motivated by hooliganism -- a claim frequently made by police in connection with alleged race hate attacks.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Russian or English or your own language:

- expressing concern about the death threats and other serious forms of intimidation directed towards Dmitrii Kraiukhin and other witnesses in the case against the Russian National Unity (RNU) that have allegedly been instigated and carried out by members RNU;
- urging the Orel regional procuracy to provide Dmitrii Kraiukhin with adequate protection as prescribed by law in line with his status as a chief witness in the court case against the RNU organization;
- urging the authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the death threats and other forms of intimidation directed towards Dmitrii Kraiukhin and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice in the course of proceedings that meet international standards of fairness;
- calling for allegations of threats against other witnesses, commentators and officials involved in the case to be promptly investigated;
- calling upon the Russian authorities to take immediate steps to counter the threat posed to ethnic and national minority groups, foreign citizens, human rights defenders (HRDs) and society as a whole by the RNU and other such organizations which propagate racial and religious hatred and intolerance and encourage and utilise violence;
- calling upon the Russian government to work with HRDs and NGOs to establish an Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Declaration on HRDs to ensure that the rights enshrined within the declaration are guaranteed to HRDs, NGOs and other civil society actors so that they can carry out their activity without fear for their safety.

APPEALS TO:

Procurator of Orel Region

Rossiskaia Federatsia

302040 g. Orel

Ul. Krasnoarmeiskaia, d17a

Prokuratura Orlovskoi oblasti

Prokuroru Nikolaiu P. Rudnevu

Russian Federation

Fax: +7 086 229 4495/3308 (if someone answers say "fax please")

Salutation Dear Procurator

Procurator General of the Russian Federation

Rossiskaia Federatsia

103793 Moskva K-31

Ul. B. Dimitrovka, d15a,

Generalnaia Prokuratura Rossiskoi Federatsii

Prokuroru Vladimiru USTINOVU

Russian Federation

Fax: + 7 095 292 8848

Salutation: Dear Procurator General

COPIES TO:

Russian Federation Minister of Internal Affairs

Rossiskaia Federatsia

117049 Moskva

Ul. Zhitnaia 16

Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del Rossiskoi Federatsii

Ministru Rashidu NURGALIEVU

Russian Federation

Fax: +7 095 237 49 25

Salutation: Dear Minister

and to diplomatic representatives of Russian Federation accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 September 2004.