

# URGENT ACTION

## RELEASE YOUTH PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

The trial of Yan Sidorov, Vladislav Mordasov and Viacheslav Shashmin is ongoing at the Rostov-on-Don regional court, in southwestern Russia. They are being prosecuted for trying to organise a peaceful protest in November 2017 in support of dozens of Rostov-on-Don residents who had lost their houses in mass fires earlier that year. At the trial, Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov reaffirmed that they had been tortured to extract “confessions” but the court disregarded the statements. The three men are prisoners of conscience and must be released immediately and unconditionally and their allegations of torture and other ill-treatment effectively investigated.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

**Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation**

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Dear Prosecutor General,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the unfounded criminal prosecution of **Yan Sidorov** and **Vladislav Mordasov** on charges of attempted organization of mass disturbances (Article 30(3), Article 212(1) of the Russian Criminal Code) and **Viacheslav Shashmin** on charges of attempted participation in mass disturbances (Article 30 (3), Article 212 (2) of the Russian Criminal Code). Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were arrested on 5 November 2017 when they were preparing to hold a picket in front of the Rostov regional government building in support of dozens of Rostov citizens who had lost their houses in mass fires in July-August 2017. Viacheslav Shashmin was arrested outside a block of flats some distance away. He maintains that he did not take part in the picket. Since November 2017 Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov have been remanded in detention and Viacheslav Shashmin held under house arrest. On 29 May, their trial started in Rostov-on-Don Regional court.

Both Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov have complained of torture and other ill-treatment by police to extract their “confessions”. Their allegations have been ignored, in violation of their rights and of fair trial principles.

I urge you as the Prosecutor General to:

- **Ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Yan Sidorov, Vladislav Mordasov and Viacheslav Shashmin, and take all necessary steps to end their criminal prosecution, as they are prisoners of conscience detained and prosecuted solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression;**
- **Ensure that Yan Sidorov's and Vladislav Mordasov's allegations of torture and other ill-treatment are promptly, effectively and impartially investigated, and anyone found responsible is brought to justice in fair trial proceedings.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 5 November 2017, 18-year-old college student Yan Sidorov and 21-year-old Vladislav Mordasov came to the square in front of the Rostov-on-Don Region administration to hold a peaceful picket. They had several printed leaflets, a loudspeaker and two rolled up handwritten posters that they had made the day before. The posters read: "Return the land to victims of Rostov fires" and "The government should resign". Even before they could start the picket, police arrested them for holding an "unlawful gathering". On the same day, police arrested 18-year-old Viacheslav Shashmin outside a block of flats close nearby. Viacheslav Shashmin claims that he did not know Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov at the time and did not participate in their picket.

On 6 November 2017 Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were sentenced in separate proceedings to seven days of "administrative detention" each under Article 20.2, part 2, of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences ("Organization or conduct of a public event without proper notification of the authorities of this event"). Viacheslav Shashmin was given five days of "administrative detention" on spurious charges of "petty hooliganism" under Article 20.1 of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences. While in police custody, Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were reportedly subjected to torture and other ill-treatment in an attempt to extract "confessions" that they were going to organize a violent demonstration. On 17 November 2017 Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were officially charged with the crimes of "attempting to organize mass disturbances" (Article 30, part 3, Article 212, part 1, of the Russian Criminal Code) and "attempting to participate in mass disturbances" (Article 30, part 3, Article 212, part 2, of the Russian Criminal Code). Viacheslav Shashmin was charged with "attempting to participate in mass disturbances". If convicted, Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov could be sentenced to up to 15 years in jail and Viacheslav Shashmin – up to eight years in jail.

Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov have remained in custody since their arrest on 5 November 2017. Viacheslav Shashmin has been under house arrest, having served administrative detention. The trial of the three young men started in Rostov-on-Don regional court on 29 May 2019. The prosecution has already presented their evidence. At least a third of the prosecution's witnesses refused to confirm their earlier testimonies given during the pre-trial investigation and stated that they had given them under pressure from the investigators.

In a series of mass fires in Rostov-on-Don in July and August 2017, more than 160 houses were destroyed, one person died, and dozens suffered injuries. Around 700 people were officially recognised as victims. While some compensation for the loss of property has been paid, the authorities did not allow people to build new houses on the same plots of land and did not pay compensation for the loss of their land, which in turn prompted rumours that the fire may have been started deliberately to evict the residents and clear the site for new developments. Many of the fire victims have spoken in support of Yan Sidorov, Vladislav Mordasov and Viacheslav Shashmin and in March 2019, more than 60 people signed an open letter in their support.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** English and Russian.

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 30 October 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Yan Sidorov (he/him), Vladislav Mordasov(he/him) and Viacheslav Shashmin (he/him)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR46/0198/2019/en/>