

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER AND DOCTOR ON TRIAL

The trial of Yana Antonova, a human rights defender and paediatrician from Krasnodar, southern Russia, resumed on 23 June. She faces up to six years in prison for commemorating a slain activist and other peaceful activities as a member of the “undesirable organisation” Open Russia.

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

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation

Igor Viktorovich Krasnov
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Online form: <https://ipriem.genproc.gov.ru/contacts/ipriem/send/>

Dear Prosecutor General,

*I am indignant about the prosecution of **Yana Antonova**, a paediatrician and a woman human rights defender from Krasnodar.*

On 22 May 2019, Yana Antonova was charged under article 284.1 of the Criminal Code for “cooperating” with an “undesirable organisation” on account of her past involvement with the Russian movement Open Russia, which brought together people interested in civic activism, including the promotion of human rights, rule of law and government accountability. The organization has never been registered and ceased its work in March 2019.

Yana Antonova has committed no crime. She is put on trial for actions such as commemorating slain political activist Boris Nemtsov and journalist Vladislav Listyev and sharing a video about the shortage of schools in her region. Yana Antonova, who is a single parent, has already lost her job as a paediatrician, and other members of her extended family have faced harassment by Russian law enforcement agencies in connection with the criminal proceedings against her.

By prosecuting Yana Antonova for her peaceful activism, the authorities are in violation of Russia's obligations under international human rights law, including in relation to the rights to freedom of expression and association, and the right to a fair trial.

I call on you to take all necessary steps to ensure that the criminal prosecution of Yana Antonova stops, and that she is not persecuted for her activism.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The “undesirable organizations” law—under which Yana Antonova is being prosecuted—makes it an administrative offense to take part in any activities of a foreign organisation designated as “undesirable”. “Repeated” commitment of this “offence” is a crime punishable by a hefty fine or prison. The designation is made by the Office of the Prosecutor General if it deems that the organisation poses a threat to the country’s “constitutional order, defence potential or state security”. Such decision effectively outlaws any activities by, or any cooperation with, the “undesirable” organisation in Russia. The law, adopted in May 2015, is part of the Russian authorities’ ongoing crackdown on freedom of association and expression (see details here: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/2223/2015/en/>). It has been used arbitrarily to ban a number of foreign organisations, most of them civil society funders, from Russia.

On [26 April 2017](#), the Prosecutor General’s Office declared “undesirable” the UK-registered organisation Otkrytaya Rossia (founded by an exiled critic of President Vladimir Putin, former prisoner of conscience Mikhail Khodorkovsky). It also added to the list of “undesirable” organisations Open Russia Civic Movement – an initiative that brought together activists in Russia and which was neither a registered “organisation”, nor was a foreign one. Nonetheless, activists who operate in Russia under the banner of “Open Russia” are regarded by the Russian authorities as members of a banned foreign organisation. Dozens of such activists have been fined for their activities under the Code of Administrative Offences, and several are facing more criminal charges for their “repeated violations” of the law.

In May 2019, a criminal case was opened against Yana Antonova. The “repeated violations” in her case consisted in her posting a video about the shortage of schools in Krasnodar Krai, a one-person picket in memory of Boris Nemtsov, a slain political activist and vocal critic of the authorities, and a repost of a quotation by Vladislav Listyev, a well-known journalist and also a victim of an unsolved murder.

Once the criminal proceedings against Yana Antonova were opened, she lost her job as a pediatrician, and her family has been harassed by the authorities as well. In October 2019 her apartment and that of her mother were searched and their respective bank accounts frozen.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Russian, English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 6 August 2020

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Yana Antonova (she/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/1376/2019/en/>