

# URGENT ACTION

## FEAR FOR SAFETY OF DETAINED PERFORMANCE ARTIST

**Performance artist Pyotr Pavlensky was charged with vandalism for setting fire to the main doors of the headquarters of the Federal Security Service on 9 November. He is currently detained in a psychiatric hospital in Moscow and is being denied access to his lawyer and the outside world. His wife fears for his health.**

**Pyotr Pavlensky** was arrested on 9 November when he threw petrol on the wooden doors of the main entrance of the headquarters of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and set fire to them. He then stood in front of the blazing doors and asked to be arrested for “terrorism”. He described his action as a protest against the use of terrorism charges to suppress dissent. He has been charged with vandalism motivated by ideological hatred. Pyotr Pavlensky is a performance artist who has staged many actions protesting against the suppression of freedom of expression in Russia including sewing his mouth shut in protest against the arrest of Pussy Riot, nailing his scrotum to the cobblestones of Red Square, and protesting against the misuse of psychiatry by slicing off his earlobe while sitting on the wall of the Psychiatric hospital where he is currently detained.

Pyotr Pavlensky was first detained in the Butyrka pre-trial detention centre, in Moscow, where lawyers face long queues to use the limited meeting rooms available to see their detained clients, and Pavlensky’s lawyers have not been able to see him since the beginning of December. On 26 January, Pyotr Pavlensky was transferred to the Serbsky State Scientific Centre for Social and Forensic Psychiatry for a psychiatric examination. On 27 January, the head doctor of the institute declared a quarantine because of an influenza epidemic, and closed the institute to visitors requiring all visitors to seek his permission to visit. Pyotr Pavlensky’s lawyers sought permission to see their client, but were told to expect an answer within 30 days. One of his lawyers told Amnesty International that they believe the quarantine is a deliberate attempt to prevent any publicity of the Pavlensky case. Both Russian law and international human rights standards require that those detained should be able to see their lawyers and communicate with the outside world.

On 3 February, in Pyotr Pavlensky’s absence, the Tagansky district court in Moscow extended his detention to 5 March. In a Facebook post, his wife has expressed fears for his health and wellbeing: “We do not know if they are injecting him with drugs, trying to give him pills. We don’t know.”

### Please write immediately in Russian or your own language:

- Urging the Russian authorities to grant Pyotr Pavlensky immediate access to his lawyer and contact with members of his family;
- Calling on them to ensure that Pyotr Pavlensky is not being subjected to non-consensual psychiatric treatment, or any other forms of ill-treatment.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 MARCH 2016 TO:

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation

Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika  
Prosecutor General’s Office  
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a  
125993 Moscow GSP- 3  
Russian Federation  
Fax: +7 495 987 5841 / +7 495 692 1725  
**Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General**

Minister of Health of the Russian Federation

Veronika Igorevna Skvortsova  
ul. Neglinnaya d.25, 3-y podezd  
Moscow  
Russian Federation  
Email: info@rosminzdrav.ru  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

### 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.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The two institutions mentioned in this Urgent Action are historically significant. The Serbsky State Scientific Centre for Social and Forensic Psychiatry was notorious in Soviet times as the centre that developed the diagnosis of “sluggish schizophrenia” in the 1960s. This diagnosis was not recognized by the World Health Organization or used outside the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and was usually applied to dissidents who were then imprisoned in psychiatric hospitals for their opposition to the regime. The hospital claims to have overcome its Soviet past. The headquarters of the Federal Security Service are located in the so called Lyubyanka building on Lyubyanka Square that was also the headquarters of the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB), where many dissidents were detained and subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

Name: Pyotr Pavlensky

Gender m/f: m

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