

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 49/09/98

UA 267/98 Death Penalty / Fear of imminent execution

13 October 1998

BELARUS Anton Borisovich Bondarenko, aged 20 ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

There are grave concerns that, if the Supreme Court of Belarus decides to uphold, or has already upheld, the death sentence passed on Anton Bondarenko, he will face imminent execution.

Anton Borisovich Bondarenko was sentenced to death on 22 June 1998 by the Minsk Regional Court for premeditated aggravated murder.

It is not known what stage Anton Bondarenko's appeal has reached. Information regarding the death penalty is classed as a state secret in Belarus, and executions are carried out in secret. It is therefore unlikely that further information on this case will become available. Appeals on behalf of Anton Bondarenko could, therefore, provide the only opportunity for international opinion to influence the outcome in his case.

If the death sentence is upheld, Anton Bondarenko's last hope is that President Lukashenka will grant him clemency. President Lukashenka is known, however, only to have pardoned one person facing the death penalty, since he came to power in 1994.

Anton Bondarenko's codefendant, 17 years old at the time of the crime, was sentenced to 10 years in a corrective penal colony.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Alyaksandr Ivanowski, the deputy Procurator General of Belarus, is recently reported in the press to have said that 33 people have been executed in the country this year. On 11 April 1998, according to a Belarussian television broadcast, at least 55 prisoners are currently on death row.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Russian, English or your own language:**

- urging the Clemency Commission and President Lukashenka to grant clemency to Anton Borisovich Bondarenko and to all other prisoners on death row in Belarus, and to commute their sentences;
- expressing concern at the high number of executions carried out in Belarus this year;
- urging the Belarussian authorities to declare an official moratorium on executions, particularly whilst its application for membership to the Council of Europe is pending, so as to demonstrate intent to move towards the abolition of the death penalty -- a commitment required of all states admitted to the Council;
- calling for official and comprehensive statistics on the application of the death penalty in Belarus to be made public;
- expressing deep sympathy with the victims of violent crime and their families, but pointing out that the death penalty has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishments and is brutalizing to all involved in its application.

**APPEALS TO:** (Please mark all appeals "URGENT - SROCHNO")

**Due to an unreliable telephone system in Belarus, fax tones may be difficult to obtain. Please keep trying (it can help to dial slowly). Additionally,**

**you may have the most success ringing during office hours as fax machines are sometimes turned off at the end of the working day (+3 hours GMT). If a voice answers, repeat "fax" until connected.**

The President of Belarus, Alyaksandr LUKASHENKA

Respublika Belarus

220016 g. Minsk

ul. Karla Marksa, 38, Administratsia Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus

Presidentu Lukashenka A.H

BELARUS

**Telegrams: Presidentu Lukashenka, Minsk, Belarus**

**Faxes: + 375 172 22 38 72 / 26 06 10**

**Salutation: Dear President**

The Head of the Department for Applications for Clemency and Citizenship at the President's Administration, Vladimir Samusev

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Otdel po voprosam pomilovaniya i grazhdanstva

Zaveduyushchemu otdelom

Samusevu V.

BELARUS

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**Salutation: Dear Mr Samusev**

The Chairman of the Supreme Court of Belarus, Valentin Sukalo

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**Salutation: Dear Mr Sukalo**

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and to diplomatic representatives of Belarus accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.