

## Update to Public Appeal

**Belarus: Public Appeal. Prisoners of Conscience: Mikalay Astreyka, Tsimafey Dranchuk, Enira Branizkaya, Alyaksandr Shalayka, 14 Aug 2006 (AI Index: EUR 49/012/2006) <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engneur490122006>**

Mikalay Astreyka, a member of the independent election monitoring group, Initiative Partnership, was conditionally released by the prison administration before the end of his sentence, on 17 November. Mikalay Astreyka commented to the Belarusian press centre, *Charter'97*, "It was so unexpected for me, that I still cannot recollect myself..." Following his release, Mikalay Astreyka has been at home, spending time with his daughter, who was born while he was in detention.

Despite his new-found freedom, there are continuing restrictions being imposed on Mikalay Astreyka. These include carrying out community service for the duration of his sentence, observing a curfew between 8pm and 8am daily, when he is required to stay at home, reporting to the local police on a regular basis and giving 15 per cent of his earnings to the government.

Amnesty International is calling for Mikalay Astreyka's release to be made unconditional and is continuing to call for the immediate and unconditional release of Tsimafey Dranchuk, who remains in prison. There will be a hearing to consider Tsimafey Dranchuk's conditional early release on 30 November.

### Background

Mikalay Astreyka was arrested on 21 February 2006, along with three other members of the group, Tsimafey Dranchuk, Enira Branizkaya and Alyaksandr Shalayka. All four were sentenced on 4 August, according to Article 193, Part 2 of the Belarusian Criminal Code, for 'organizing and running an unregistered organization that infringes the rights of citizens'.

Enira Branizkaya and Alyaksandr Shalayka were released on 21 August, having served the full term of their six-month sentences. Mikalay Astreyka was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and Tsimafey Dranchuk was sentenced to one year.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

**Please continue to send cards or letters of support and solidarity to Tsimafey Dranchuk, the last remaining member of Initiative Partnership, still in prison. Your good wishes will continue to provide invaluable support at this time. You can write in Belarusian, Russian, English or your own language.**

**You may wish to include these messages, in Belarusian:**

I am thinking of you:	Я думаю пра цябе
We are thinking of you:	Мы думаем пра цябе
I am wishing you well:	Я жадаю табе добра
We are wishing you well:	Мы жадаем табе добра

**Please send your greetings to:**

**Tsimafey Dranchuk  
Kalvariiskaia str., 36  
IK-1  
MINSK 220079  
BELARUS**

**Please also continue to write to the Belarusian authorities, in Belarusian, Russian, English or your own language.**

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Tsimafey Dranchuk and for all conditions of Mikalay Astreyka's release to be dropped;
- reminding the Belarusian authorities of their obligations under articles 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Belarus is a state party, which guarantees the right to freedom of expression, assembly and association;
- calling on the Belarusian authorities to immediately review laws, regulations and practices relating to the registration and activities of non-governmental organizations, particularly the Law on Public Associations adopted in August 2005;
- telling the Belarusian authorities to stop the obstruction, harassment and intimidation of civil society activists engaged directly or indirectly in the promotion and defence of human rights in Belarus.

President

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**Salutation: Dear President Lukashenka**

Procurator General

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**Salutation: Dear Procurator General**

Minister of Internal Affairs

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**Salutation: Dear Minister**