

BELARUS**Dmitry Vyacheslavovich Yefremenkov**
Yevgeny Igorevich Voronezhsky

On 12 March 1999, Dmitry Vyacheslavovich Yefremenkov and his alleged accomplice, Yevgeny Igorevich Voronezhsky, were sentenced to death and to 22 years in prison respectively in Vitebsk, north-east Belarus, for a murder committed in July 1998. Amnesty International is concerned that they were found guilty after an unfair trial on the basis of confessions resulting from ill-treatment in police custody.

As the time scale of any appeal is not known and information about the case is unlikely to be forthcoming this may be the only chance to influence the outcome. This also means that Dmitry Vyacheslavovich Yefremenkov could be at risk of being imminently executed.

Dmitry Yefremenkov's lawyer has said that his client's confession was obtained under considerable duress and called the validity of his conviction into question. He has also said that he was not given full access to his client during his detention and that when he was allowed to see him police officials were constantly present making his client too afraid to speak about his ill-treatment.

Amnesty International has not been able to make contact with the lawyer of Yevgeny Igorevich Voronezhsky.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Information regarding the death penalty is classed as a state secret in Belarus, and executions are carried out in secret. However, on 5 August 1999 the Chairman of the Supreme Court of Belarus Valyantsin Sukala told a news conference that from January to August 1999 29 people had been executed in Belarus. This figure was only slightly lower than for the same period in 1998. Belarus's deputy Procurator, General Alyaksandr Ivanowsky, stated on 11 August 1998 that 33 people had been executed in Belarus since the beginning of this year (whose sentences were passed in previous years).

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

- expressing concern that Dmitry Vyacheslavovich Yefremenkov and Yevgeny Igorevich Voronezhsky may have been ill-treated in police custody;
- expressing concern that they may have been convicted of murder after an unfair trial based on confessions made under duress from police;
- urging the Clemency Commission and President Lukashenka to grant clemency to Dmitry Vyacheslavovich Yefremenkov;
- calling for an independent investigation into allegations that Dmitry Vyacheslavovich Yefremenkov reportedly confessed to the crime under physical duress, for the findings to be made public and for any law enforcement officer found guilty of ill-treatment to be brought to justice in accordance with the norms of international law;
- calling for an investigation to ascertain whether Yevgeny Igorevich Voronezhsky was also ill-treated in custody;
- urging the Clemency Commission and President Lukashenka to grant clemency to all prisoners on death row in Belarus, and to commute their sentences;
- 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.

- expressing concern at the high rate of executions in Belarus in 1998 and 1999;

- urging the authorities to declare an official moratorium on executions in view of its application for membership of the Council of Europe, in order to demonstrate its intention to move towards the abolition of the death penalty, a commitment which is required of all states on admission to the Council of Europe;

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

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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

Respublika Belarus

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ul. Karla Marksa, 38, Administratsia Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus

Otdel po voprosam pomilovaniya i grazhdanstva

Zaveduyushchemu otdelom

Samusevu V.

BELARUS

Telegrams: Samusevu, Administratsia Prezidenta, Minsk, Belarus

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Salutation: Dear Mr Samusev

The Chairman of the Supreme Court of Belarus, Valentin Sukalo

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Verkhovny Sud Respubliki Belarus

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Salutation: Dear Mr Sukalo

COPIES TO:

The Procurator General of Belarus, Aleh BOZHELKO

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Salutation: Dear Procurator General

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, Ivan ANTONOVICH
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Salutation: Dear Foreign Minister

and to diplomatic representatives of Belarus accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 December 1999