

EXTERNAL

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Fear of imminent execution

25 June 1996

KYRGYZSTAN Nikolai Sokolov, aged 37

Amnesty International fears that Nikolai Sokolov faces imminent execution unless the Presidential Clemency Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic recommends that the President exercises his constitutional authority to commute this death sentence.

Nikolai Sokolov was sentenced to death by Chuy Regional Court on 22 April 1996 for the premeditated, aggravated murder of one man and the attempted murder of another. An appeal against the death sentence was rejected by the Supreme Court of Kyrgyzstan on 28 May. Nikolai Sokolov's only remaining hope of avoiding execution is a petition for clemency.

Human rights monitors in Kyrgyzstan and Nikolai Sokolov's lawyer have cast doubt on the issue of premeditation in the crimes for which Nikolai Sokolov was convicted, noting that the crimes were committed in the context of a fight between Nikolai Sokolov and the two victims, with whom he was not acquainted.

It has also been argued that Nikolai Sokolov acted in self-defence: Nikolai Sokolov claims that he stabbed the man who died, S. Kidikov, with a putty knife he was carrying in his pocket to stop Kidikov choking him. The other man was not seriously injured, and was the chief prosecution witness at the trial.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and without reservation, on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Kyrgyzstan retains the death penalty for 15 peacetime and two wartime offences.

As crime rates have increased in recent years, Kyrgyzstan has increased its use of the death penalty: in 1995 at least 30 people were executed. Aside from the case of Nikolai Sokolov, so far in 1996 one other death penalty case has come to the attention of Amnesty International, that of Lyubov Sirotkina. She was sentenced to death in January, but in March the Supreme Court upheld an appeal and substituted a 15-year prison sentence.

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

to the President:

- urging the President to use his constitutional authority and commute Nikolai Sokolov's death sentence, and all other death sentences that come before him;

to the Clemency Commission (address 2):

- urging the Clemency Commission to recommend that the President grants clemency to Nikolai Sokolov and commutes his death sentence;

to both addresses:

- expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

- expressing sympathy for the victims of 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:

1. The President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Askar Akayev

Kyrgyzskaya Respublika

720003 g. Bishkek

Prospekt Chuy, 205

Dom pravitelstva

Prezidentu AKAYEVU A.A.

Telegrams: Kyrgyzskaya Respublika, 720003 Bishkek, Prezidentu Akayevu A.A.

Faxes: +7 3312 21 86 27

Salutation: Dear President

2. The Head of the Department for Citizenship and Clemency Questions at the President's Apparatus, Aynabek Kachkynbayev

Kyrgyzskaya Respublika

720003 g. Bishkek

Prospekt Chuy, 205

Dom pravitelstva

Apparat Prezidenta

Otdel po voprosam grazhdanstva i pomilovaniya

Zaveduyushchemu otdelom KACHKYNBAYEVU A.

Telegrams: Kyrgyzskaya Respublika, 720003 Bishkek, Otdel pomilovaniya, Kachkynbayevu A.

Faxes: +7 3312 21 86 27

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

The Chairman of the Supreme Court, K. Boobekov

Kyrgyzskaya Respublika

720505 g. Bishkek

ul. Orozbekova, 37

Verkhovny Sud

Predsedatelyu BOOBEKOVU K.

The Procurator General, Asanbek Sharshenaliyev

Kyrgyzskaya Respublika

720300 g. Bishkek

pr. Erkindyk, 39a

Prokuratura Kyrgyzskoy Respubliki

Generalnomu prokuroru SHARSHENALIYEVU A.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Roza Otunbayeva

Kyrgyzskaya Respublika

720003 g. Bishkek

ul. Abdumomunova, 205

Ministerstvo inostrannykh del

Ministru OTUNBAYEVOY R.

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and to diplomatic representatives of KYRGYZSTAN accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 August 1996.