

URGENT ACTION

APPEAL UNSUCCESSFUL FOR ART EXHIBITIONISTS

On 4 October 2010, the Moscow City Court upheld on appeal the decision made by the Taganskii court on 12 July to convict Yurii Samodurov and Andrei Yerofeev for “inciting hatred or enmity” and “denigration of human dignity” and to fine them 200,000 and 150,000 roubles (USD\$6,673,21 and USD\$5,004,90) respectively.

Yurii Samodurov, former director of the Sakharov Museum, and Andrei Yerofeev, former head of the department for contemporary art at the State Tretiakov Gallery, were charged under Article 282(2) of the Russian Criminal Code and put on trial in Taganskii District Court for organizing a contemporary art exhibition in Moscow in 2007.

The exhibition *Forbidden Art 2006* gathered together a number of works of art that had been refused inclusion at various exhibitions in 2006. It contained works by some of Russia’s most well-known contemporary artists, such as Ilya Kabakov, Alexander Kosolapov, the group Blue Noses, Aleksandr Savko and Mikhail Roginskii. The art presented included a photomontage of a photograph of a frame of an icon and a photo of caviar inside the icon. Other examples incorporated reproductions of religious paintings with the figure of Mickey Mouse inserted.

The prosecution claimed that Yurii Samodurov and Andrei Yerofeev had arranged the exhibition in such a way that it denigrates Christianity, and especially the Russian Orthodox faith, and incites hatred against Orthodox and other Christians. Amnesty International believes that the exhibition *Forbidden Art 2006* does not incite hatred. The organizers of the exhibition were peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression and they should not have been prosecuted.

Following the Moscow City Court decision, the sentence has come into force and the men’s lawyer has indicated that they intend to appeal the decision further at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

As the judicial process appears to have been exhausted locally within the Russian Federation, no further action is required from the UA network at this stage.

Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the second update of UA 139/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/035/2010/en>

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