

# URGENT ACTION

## RUSSIAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER BEATEN

**Russian human rights defender Aleksei Sokolov is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment. He is currently held in a remand centre in Novosibirsk, Western Siberia, where he has allegedly been beaten by prison guards. In the coming days he is due to be transferred to a prison in the Krasnoyarsk region of Siberia, thousands of kilometres from his home. He remains at risk of further torture and ill-treatment.**

Aleksei Sokolov, the head of a Russian human rights organization, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in May 2010 for theft and robbery. His sentence, which was imposed after a trial held with several reported violations of fair trial standards, was reduced to three years' imprisonment on appeal. His lawyers are planning a further appeal. Amnesty International is concerned that Aleksei Sokolov may be a prisoner of conscience, targeted for his human rights work.

According to his lawyers, Aleksei Sokolov has been ordered to serve his sentence in Krasnoyarsk, more than 2,000 kilometres from the city of Yekaterinburg, where he lives and where he has been held until 25 August. On 26 August, he was transferred to the FGU IZ-54/1 remand centre in Novosibirsk, located between Yekaterinburg and Krasnoyarsk. Local sources have reported to Amnesty International that shortly after his arrival in Novosibirsk, he was beaten up by prison guards and that he has also been placed in solitary confinement for several hours. Amnesty International is concerned that Aleksei Sokolov could face similar treatment in Krasnoyarsk.

Amnesty International is concerned that sending Aleksei Sokolov to serve his sentence far from his home does not comply with international human rights standards requiring that prisoners should serve their sentence close to their home whenever possible, in particular to allow for family visits. Aleksei Sokolov's transfer to Krasnoyarsk prison colony also makes communication with his lawyers more difficult, which might violate his right to receive a fair hearing of his intended second appeal. The decision to send him to Krasnoyarsk was allegedly given in a special directive from the Russian Prison Service received by the prison authorities in Yekaterinburg shortly after his sentence was reduced on appeal.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Russian, English or your own language:

- urging the Russian authorities to ensure that Aleksei Sokolov is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- urging the Russian authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into allegations that Aleksei Sokolov has been beaten by the prison officers and to bring those responsible to justice;
- expressing concern that Aleksei Sokolov may be a prisoner of conscience;
- urging the authorities to transfer Aleksei Sokolov to a place of detention closer to his home in Yekaterinburg.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 OCTOBER 2010 TO:

Director of the Department of Execution  
of Punishments  
Aleksandr A. Reimer  
ul. Zhitnaya 14, GSP-1  
119991 Moscow  
Russian Federation  
**Fax: +7 495 982 19 50**  
**+ 7 495 955 59 12**  
**Salutation: Dear Director**

Novosibirsk Prosecutor  
V.P.Ponomarev  
Novosibirsk Prosecutor's Office  
pr.Dezerzhinskogo,5  
630015 Novosibirsk  
Russian Federation  
**Fax: +7 383 279 11 14**  
**Salutation: Dear Prosecutor**

### And copies to:

Ombudsperson of the Russian  
Federation  
Vladimir P.Lukin  
Ul.Miasnitskaia, 47  
Moscow  
107048 Russian Federation  
**Fax: +7 495 607 74 70**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the sixth update of UA 128/09 (EUR 46/011/2009). Further information: [www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/011/2009/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/011/2009/en)

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Aleksei Sokolov is a founder and the head of the Russian human rights organization *Pravovaia Osnova (Legal Base)* which campaigns against torture and other ill-treatment of detainees in the Russian Federation. The work of *Legal Base* brought about several investigations against law enforcement officers on allegations including the use of torture to coerce suspects to "confess."

Aleksei Sokolov became prominent after he publicized and distributed a film about torture and other ill-treatment in a temporary holding centre in prison colony IK-2 in Yekaterinburg. The film received wide coverage, both in Russia and internationally, and led to the closure of the temporary holding centre.

He was also investigating possible corruption in some law-enforcement agencies in Yekaterinburg: some officials, according to his findings, had helped to cover up impunity in the temporary holding centre in Yekaterinburg.

In 2008 Aleksei Sokolov was appointed a member of the Public Commission for the control of places of detention and conducted a series of visits to detention facilities in this capacity. He got suspended from this position following his detention in May 2009.

In 2008 he learned that several prisoners were being pressured into claiming that he had been involved in crimes, including the robbery in 2004 and theft in 2001. Investigation into these crimes had been closed several times because the perpetrators could not be identified, but were re-opened shortly before Aleksei Sokolov's arrest on 13 May 2009. Shortly after his detention, police allegedly threatened to torture him because of his work in defence of human rights. Amnesty International believes that Aleksei Sokolov may be a prisoner of conscience, in fact targeted for his legitimate human rights work.

On 13 May 2010, the Bogdanovich town court sentenced Aleksei Sokolov to serve five years in a high security prison colony for theft allegedly committed in 2001 and for robbery allegedly committed in 2004. The court cleared him of the third charge with regard to allegations of another 2004 robbery.

Aleksei Sokolov's lawyers stated that the court based its verdict solely on the statements of the co-accused in this case who were already serving sentences for these and other crimes. The lawyers also reported a number of violations of criminal procedure throughout the pre-trial and trial stages.

Further information on UA: 128/09 Index: EUR 46/031/2010 Issue Date: 02 September 2010

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