

# URGENT ACTION

## IMPRISONED POET IS AT RISK OF TORTURE

Poet Artyom Kamardin, sentenced to seven years imprisonment for public reading of his anti-war poem, is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment while being transferred to a penal colony and during his imprisonment there. He also requires an urgent medical examination and care. He is being prosecuted for exercising his right to freedom of expression and must be immediately released. His case must be overturned.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

*Head of the Federal Penitentiary Service  
Gostev Arkadii Aleksandrovich  
ul. Zhitnaya 14  
Moscow  
119049  
Russian Federation*

Dear Mr. Gostev

*I am writing to you to express my deep concern about the health and well-being of poet Artyom Kamardin, sentenced to seven years imprisonment on trumped-up charges for a public reading of one of his poems. Artyom was subjected to harassment and ill-treatment while in pre-trial detention in Moscow. According to information received by his family, the penal authorities threatened that he would be further tortured and ill-treated during his upcoming transfer to, and after his arrival, at a penal colony.*

*On 25 November, it was revealed that Artyom Kamardin had been transferred from a Moscow pre-trial detention center to another pre-trial detention centre (SIZO-1) in Vladimir. His family was not informed of this transfer, nor of the name of the penal colony to which he will be transferred to serve his sentence, which is a violation of Russian law. He was also denied the chance to contact his family before the transfer and upon arrival in Vladimir, and his lawyer has also been unable to contact him. There are concerns he may face torture or other ill-treatment during the transfer and at the penal colony. I am also deeply concerned about the impact of the inhumane transfer conditions on Artyom Kamardin's health. For months, he has suffered from severe back pain, headaches, nausea, dizziness, and tinnitus, yet he has received no proper medical examination or treatment during his pre-trial detention. Artyom urgently requires a medical examination and appropriate care.*

*I urge you to ensure that Artyom Kamardin is not subjected to harassment, torture, or other ill-treatment during his future transfer to, and while serving his sentence at, the penal colony. Additionally, I call on you to guarantee he receives the necessary healthcare he requires during transit and is transferred to a civilian hospital for a proper medical examination and treatment upon arrival. Lastly, I request that his family is promptly informed of the location where he will serve his sentence and that he is allowed to maintain contact with them during the transfer and at the colony.*

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 22 September 2022, activist and poet Artyom Kamardin participated in a public poetry reading in Moscow Triumphalnaya Square. These readings, called the "Maykovsky Readings", have been held near the monument to the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky and continue the tradition of Soviet dissidents. The readings in September 2022 were held in protest against the mobilization declared the day before to replenish Russian troops fighting the war of aggression against Ukraine.

On 26 September 2022, armed police broke into the home of Artyom Kamardin and his partner Aleksandra Popova. The police did not let Artyom's lawyer be present during the search. Based on information provided by Aleksandra Popova, the law enforcement officers tortured Artyom Kamardin, subjecting him to sexualised violence, filming it and making her watch the video. Then, they forced Artyom Kamardin on to his knees and made him record an "apology" video for his anti-war poem.

Aleksandra Popova was also tortured by the police officers, who attached stickers to her face with superglue, pulled out her hair and beat her, which, according to Aleksandra Popova, resulted in concussion and a head injury. She was also verbally abused and threatened with gang rape.

Artyom Kamardin was diagnosed with concussion, multiple bruises and other injuries, according to his lawyer. The authorities refused to hospitalize him.

A criminal case was opened against Artyom Kamardin and two other men, Yegor Shtovba and Nikolay Daineko, who were also present at the Maykovsky Readings. They were charged with "incitement of hatred and enmity" (Article 282 (2) of the Criminal Code) and "public calls for actions directed against state security" (Article 280.4(3) of the Criminal Code). Nikolay Daineko entered a guilty plea and was sentenced to four years imprisonment in May 2023. On 28 December 2023, the Moscow Tverskoy District Court sentenced Artyom Kamardin to seven years imprisonment. Yegor Shtovba was sentenced to five and a half years imprisonment. Artyom Kamardin had some pre-existing back conditions prior to his arrest and sentencing which have deteriorated during his imprisonment. Since April 2024 he has been suffering from severe back pain. He also reported additional significant deterioration in his health, including headaches, nausea, dizziness, and tinnitus. His psychological state has been also affected and he has had disturbed sleep and other issues.

For several months, Artyom's family tried unsuccessfully to get him medically examined. On 21 October 2024, Artyom was finally transferred to the hospital ward of another pretrial detention centre. However, no adequate medical examination was conducted due to the absence of the necessary equipment. The only treatment that Artyom Kamardin received was painkillers and vitamin injections. Artyom Kamardin was returned to the pretrial detention centre, but his condition did not improve. There are concerns that his health may further deteriorate during his transfer to a penal colony.

Sources close to Artyom Kamardin told Amnesty International that he had been subjected to harassment and ill-treatment during his pre-trial detention. His family also received information that Artyom Kamardin had been threatened with further torture and ill-treatment during transfer to and after the arrival at a penal colony. In Russia, torture and other ill-treatment in custody remains endemic. The perpetrators enjoy near total impunity.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Russian or English

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 20 January 2025

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Artyom Kamardin (he/him)