

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 49/02/97

14 March 1997

**Further information on UA 266/96 (EUR 49/05/96, 18 November 1996) -
Ill-treatment/ Possible prisoners of conscience (POC)**

BELARUS Peaceful demonstrators reportedly beaten, 100 detained

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at reports that about 100 demonstrators have been detained in Belarus, and some of them allegedly ill-treated by the police following a peaceful protest on 10 March 1997 against President Lukashenko's policies aimed at forging closer ties with the Russian Federation.

According to opposition leaders of the Belarussian Popular Front (BNF), 100 people, many of them teenagers, were arrested on 10 March after a demonstration in which several thousand people marched through the centre of the capital Minsk. The march was held in defiance of a ban by the local authorities on demonstrations involving more than 40 people.

Several people are reported to have been injured when police stopped people marching towards the President's residence. One of the BNF leaders, Lyavon Barshchevski, reported at a news conference that he had been beaten and detained by policemen in civilian clothes after the demonstration. Vyacheslav Sivchyk, secretary of the BNF and former POC, said that one protestor had been imprisoned for 10 days, and that 100 others could face fines or up to two weeks' imprisonment.

Vladimir Statkevich, an opposition activist who took part in the demonstration, reported that policemen in plain clothes had handcuffed him and beaten him around the head and chest.

Amnesty International is not aware of any steps taken by the government or by President Lukashenko to stop the pattern of ill-treatment of demonstrators by law enforcement officials.

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

- calling for the immediate release of any demonstrators held in police custody solely for exercising their right to freedom of assembly;
- seeking assurances that no-one in the future will be subjected to ill-treatment or imprisonment by the police solely on the grounds of their political beliefs and for peacefully expressing their right to freedom of assembly;
- urging the authorities to initiate prompt and impartial investigations into all allegations of ill-treatment of demonstrators by the police and to bring anyone found responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to provide compensation to the victims of police abuse and to inform all law enforcement officials that torture and ill-treatment are prohibited in any circumstances under the provisions of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Belarus is a party as a successor state of the USSR.

APPEALS TO:

The President of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka
Respublika Belarus

220010 g. Minsk
pl. Nezavisimosti
Apparat Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus
Prezidentu Respubliki Belarus LUKASHENKO A.H
BELARUS

Faxes: + 375 172 23-58-25

Telegrams: Prezidentu Lukashenko, Minsk, Belarus

Salutation: Dear President

The Procurator General of Belarus, Aleh BOZHELKO
Respublika Belarus
220050 g. Minsk
Ul. Internatsionalnaya, 22
Prokuratura Respubliki Belarus
Generalnomu prokuroru
BOZHELKU A.
BELARUS

Faxes: +375 172 26-41-66

Telegrams: Generalnomu prokuroru, Minsk, Belarus

Salutation: Dear Procurator General

Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Yuryy Zakharenka

Respublika Belarus
g. Minsk
ul Urytskaha, 5
Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del
Respubliki Belarus
Ministru ZAKHARENKA Y.
BELARUS

Faxes: +375 (0172) 26-12-47

Telegrams: Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del, Minsk, Belarus

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, Ivan ANTONOVICH
Respublika Belarus
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Ul. Lenina, 19
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Respubliki Belarus
Ministry ANTONOVICH I.
BELARUS

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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 25 April 1997.