

EXTERNAL

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Fear of execution/ Death penalty

18 July 1997

BELARUS Igor GANYA , aged 34, married with two children
F. VEREGA

Amnesty International is gravely concerned that Igor Ganya and F. Verega, both citizens of Moldova, may face execution in Belarus if their appeals against their death sentences are not upheld by the Supreme Court or President Lukashenka.

Igor Ganya and F. Verega were sentenced to death on 30 June 1997 by the Minsk Regional Court for premeditated, aggravated murder under article 100 of the Belarus Criminal Code.

Background information:

In May 1997, the head of the Belarus Ministry of Justice's department dealing with the application of the death penalty and executions, Vladimir Samusev claimed that 38 people were sentenced to death in Belarus in 1996. He said appeals for clemency were lodged in 32 cases and that President Lukashenka rejected them all because of the nature of the offences. He added that seven of those sentenced last year were aged between 21 and 25. Amnesty International fears that all those sentenced in 1996 may have been executed, but no official information on the number of executions carried out recently in Belarus was released.

As far as Amnesty International is aware, President Lukashenka has not granted clemency to a single death row prisoner during his two and a half years in office.

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

- urging the Supreme Court of Belarus to overturn the death penalty imposed on Igor Ganya and F. Verega;
- urging the Clemency Commission and the President to grant clemency to Igor Ganya, F. Verega sentenced to death by the Minsk Regional Court on 30 June 1997;
- expressing sympathy with the victims of violent crime and their families, but referring to the 1988 Study for the United Nations on the death penalty which concluded that the death penalty was not an effective deterrent for violent crimes;
- expressing concern at the very high rate of executions in Belarus during 1996, and urging the Belorussian authorities to declare an official moratorium on executions in view of Belarus' application for membership to the Council of Europe, to demonstrate Belarus' intent to move towards the abolition of the death penalty, a commitment which is required of all states on admission to the Council of Europe.

APPEALS TO:

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenka

Respublika Belarus

220010 g. Minsk

pl. Nezavisimosti, Apparat Presidenta Respubliki Belarus

Presidentu Respubliki Belarus, Lukashenka A.H

Telegrams: Belarus, Minsk, Presidentu Lukashenka.A

Faxes: + 375 172 235825 (if voice ask for fax)

Salutation: Dear President

The Head of the Department for Applications for Clemency and Citizenship at the President's Administration, name not known

Respublika Belarus

220010 g. Minsk

Apparat Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus

Otdel po voprosam pomilovaniya i grazhdanstva

Zaveduyushchemu otdelom

(i.e. to the Head of department)

Faxes: + 375 172 235825 (if voice ask for fax)

Telegrams: Belarus, Minsk 220010, pl. Nezavisimosti, Otdel pomilovaniya, Zav.

Salutation: Dear Head of Department

The Chairman of the Supreme Court of Belarus, Meshislau GRIB

Respublika Belarus

220030 g. Minsk

Ul. Lenina, 28

Verkhovny Sud Respubliki Belarus

Predsedatelyu GRIBU M.

COPIES TO:

The Procurator General of Belarus, Aleh BOZHELKO

Respublika Belarus

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The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, Ivan ANTONOVICH

Respublika Belarus

220030 g.Minsk

Ul. Lenina, 19

Ministerstvo inostrannykh del

Respubliki Belarus

Ministry ANTONOVICH I.

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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 29 August 1997.