

# URGENT ACTION

## FORMER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE GIVEN FIVE YEARS

**On 14 May, prisoner of conscience, Andrei Sannikau, was sentenced to five years in prison by a court in Minsk. Amnesty International believes that the former Presidential candidate has been sentenced solely for the peaceful exercise of this right to freedom of assembly and expression and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.**

A day before he was sentenced, **Andrei Sannikau** made a statement in court, claiming that he was tortured and ill-treated in detention and that evidence used against him was obtained under torture. Amnesty International believes that charges against Andrei Sannikau for 'organizing mass disorder' are unfounded and that the authorities' attempts to incriminate him are part of a broader clampdown against the opposition and civil society at large, following the demonstration.

The organization condemns the Belarusian authorities' failure to provide Andrei Sannikau with adequate medical treatment for his deteriorating health. On several occasions during his trial, Andrei Sannikau requested medical assistance but his requests were repeatedly refused.

Three further prisoners of conscience were also sentenced on Monday 16 May. Andrei Sannikau's wife, Iryna Khalip, a journalist, was given a two-year suspended sentence and opposition activists Pavel Sevarnyets and Syargei Martseleu were sentenced to three years in a correctional facility and two years' probation, respectively. All three were charged with breaching public order, following their participation in a demonstration in December.

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

- Reminding the Belarusian authorities that Andrei Sannikau is a prisoner of conscience; that the charges against him should be dropped and that all prisoners of conscience should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- Calling on the Belarusian authorities to give Andrei Sannikau immediate access to an independent medical expert and to ensure that he is given adequate medical treatment, including transfer to a hospital, if necessary;
- Expressing your concern that Andrei Sannikau has been subjected to torture or ill-treatment while in detention;
- Urging the Belarusian authorities to ensure the safety of all detainees and to conduct an immediate investigation into allegations of torture and ill-treatment;

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 JUNE 2011 TO:

#### President

Alyksandr Lukashenka  
ul. Karla Marxa 38  
220016 Minsk, BELARUS  
Fax: +375 17 226 06 10/+375 17  
222 38 72

Email: [contact@president.gov.by](mailto:contact@president.gov.by)

**Salutation: Dear President**

#### Prosecutor General

Grigory Alekseevich Vasilevich  
Internatsionalnaya str. 22  
220050 Minsk  
BELARUS

**Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General**

**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 seventh update of UA 264/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR49/009/2011/en>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Andrei Sannikau is one of 11 prisoners of conscience who are currently imprisoned or detained in Belarus in connection with a largely peaceful demonstration that took place on 19 December 2010. Tens of thousands of Belarusians gathered in central Minsk to protest against unfair elections. The demonstration was mostly peaceful, but when a violent incident broke out at the doors of Government House, riot police moved in to disperse the crowds. Over 700 people were detained, the overwhelming majority of whom had been peaceful participants and bystanders.

Most of the detained were charged with administrative offences and sentenced to 10 – 15 days' imprisonment. However, a considerable number, including six of the seven opposition presidential candidates, other opposition activists and leading independent journalists, were charged, including with 'organizing mass disorder' and risk being sentenced to up to 15 years' imprisonment. Since the demonstration, the authorities have conducted country-wide searches of opposition and media offices, and human rights defenders, lawyers and other civil society activists have witnessed an unprecedented clampdown on their activities. Many have been detained in the months following the demonstration.

Of the 11 prisoners of conscience to date, seven have been sentenced to between two and five years' imprisonment. Individuals named in previous updates to UA 264/10 who are not named below have now been released on bail. Individuals named in the list below but not named in previous updates have not recently been detained, but Amnesty International has only recently been informed about their situation.

The 11 prisoners of conscience are:

Presidential candidates:

1. Mykalau Statkevich 2. Uladzimir Nyaklyayeu 3. Andrei Sannikau

Opposition activists:

4. Alyksandr Atroshchankau, press secretary to Andrei Sannikau 5. Zmitser Bandarenka, activist for Andrei Sannikau 6. Zmitser Dashkevich, leader of the youth movement *Young Front* 7. Eduard Lobau, member of the youth movement *Young Front* 8. Mikita Likhavid, Student 9. Ales Kirkevich, member of the youth movement *Young Front* 10. Pavel Sevarnyets, activist for opposition presidential candidate Vital Rymasheusky 11. Dmitry Bulanov, nurse.

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