

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE NOW INCOMMUNICADO

Presidential candidate Andrei Sannikau, who was sentenced to five years' imprisonment on 14 May, is now being held incommunicado. He is at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Andrei Sannikau was sentenced to five years' imprisonment on 14 May, for taking part in the post-election demonstration on 19 December 2010 in Minsk. During his trial, Andrei Sannikau made a public statement in which he said he had been tortured and otherwise ill-treated in detention, and accused the head of the KGB detention facility of threatening "the life and health" of his wife and child.

On 17 May, Andrei Sannikau's wife, and his mother, went to Partyzanski district court in Minsk and asked to be allowed to meet with him; the court granted permission immediately. On the morning of 18 May, when they arrived at the KGB detention facility, where they believed Andrei Sannikau was held, and asked to meet with him, they were told that he was not detained there. The two women went on to a second detention facility, where prisoners are held before being transferred to prison, but they were told that he was not there either. They phoned a third detention facility and got the same answer.

Hours later, Andrei Sannikau's lawyer was told that he was, in fact, being detained in the KGB detention facility. Neither his lawyer nor his family have been given access to him. Being held incommunicado in this fashion puts Andrei Sannikau at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

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

- Demanding that the authorities allow Andrei Sannikau to see his lawyer and family, in accordance with the Partyzanski district court ruling of 17 May;
- Calling on them to ensure that Andrei Sannikau is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- Reminding them that Andrei Sannikau is a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights and that he should be released immediately and unconditionally.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 JUNE 2011 TO:

Chairman, State Security Committee
(KGB)

Vadim Zaitsev
ul. Komsomolskaya 17
220050 Minsk
BELARUS

Fax: +375 17 219 92 30

Salutation: Dear Chairman

Prosecutor General

Grigory Vasilevich
Internatsionalnaya str. 22
220050 Minsk
BELARUS

Fax: +375 (17) 226 42 52

Salutation: Dear General Prosecutor

And copies to:

Partyzanski District Court
ul. Semashko 33
220027 Minsk
BELARUS

Tel/Fax: +375 17 297 64 25

(if someone answers, say "Fax!")

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 eighth 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 have been detained since a largely peaceful demonstration that took place on 19 December 2010.

On the ninth day of his trial, Andrei Sannikau said in a statement that the evidence against him had been obtained under torture. He described the methods used to subject him to both physical and psychological pressure, and the authorities' demands that he confess, in line with their requirements. When he refused to confess, the head of the KGB told him, "in this case we will apply more brutal measures to your wife and child." Aware that his wife had also been detained, and that efforts were being made to take his son into care, he took the threats seriously and tried to cooperate. He was refused access to a lawyer and only able to meet with a lawyer in private on 22 March, when he had been detained for over three months. For a whole month, he was not able to send or receive letters and says that throughout his detention he has been isolated from outside information.

The 11 prisoners of conscience are:

Presidential candidates Mykalau Statkevich, Uladzimir Nyaklyayeu and Andrei Sannikau

Opposition activists Alyaksandr Atroshchankau (press secretary to Andrei Sannikau); Zmitser Bandarenka (activist for Andrei Sannikau); Zmitser Dashkevich, leader of the youth movement *Young Front*; Eduard Lobau, member of *Young Front*; Mikita Likhavid, student; Ales Kirkevich, member of *Young Front*; Pavel Sevarnyets, activist for opposition presidential candidate Vital Rymasheusky; Dmitry Bulanov, nurse.

Further information on UA: 264/10 Index: EUR 49/013/2011 Issue Date: 18 May 2011

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