

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER MUST BE RELEASED

Belarusian human rights defender Nasta (Anastasia) Loika remains arbitrarily detained serving her fourth 15-day administrative punishment since September. The authorities continue targeting Nasta Loika with fabricated allegations in retaliation for her human rights work. There are serious concerns for her safety and wellbeing following reports that she has been subjected to torture or other ill-treatment. She must be immediately released.

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

Andrei Shved

Prosecutor General of the Republic of Belarus

Email: info@prokuratura.gov.by

Dear Prosecutor General,

I am extremely concerned about the renewed arbitrary detention of human rights defenders and educator **Nasta (Anastasia) Loika** and reports of torture and other ill-treatment.

On 28 October, Nasta Loika was arbitrarily detained in Minsk and punished with 15 days in custody under fabricated accusations of “petty hooliganism” (Article 19.1 of the Code of Administrative Offences). However, she was not released after serving her 15-day detention but given an additional 15 days in custody for the same alleged offence. This is the fourth time since the beginning of September that Nasta Loika has been handed the same detention term for the same absurd allegations, in what constitutes a clear pattern of harassment against a human rights defender.

Importantly, during the last online hearing Nasta Loika reported being tortured with electric shock during questioning and left out in the cold without outdoor clothes for eight hours. The prison authorities are also refusing to give her parcels with warm clothes, personal hygiene items and medicines that she urgently needs.

Nasta Loika has committed no offence and is being relentlessly targeted by the authorities in retaliation for her human rights work.

I urge you to do everything in your power to:

- **Ensure Nasta Loika’s immediate release, and end the misuse of the administrative justice system to target human rights defenders;**
- **Ensure that Nasta Loika is not tortured or otherwise illtreated, and that she is treated in accordance with international human rights laws and standards.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nasta (Anastasia) Loika is a prominent human rights defender and educator, focusing her work on human rights violations resulting from the repressive “anti-extremist” legislation in Belarus, the protection of foreign citizens and stateless persons in Belarus, and on human rights education.

Nasta Loika was arbitrarily detained on 6 September as she was leaving the Minsk City Court after attending a court hearing in the trial against fellow human rights defenders [Marfa Rabkova, Andrei Chapyuk and their eight co-defendants](#). They were handed lengthy prison sentences on fabricated charges. On 7 September, Nasta Loika was detained for 15 days purportedly for “petty hooliganism”, a violation under Article 19.1 of the Code of Administrative Offences. On 22 September, the Frunzenski District Court of Minsk detained her again for 15 days under the same allegations. During her detention Nasta Loika was denied access to her lawyer and refused necessary medical treatment and basic necessities, including warm clothes and drinking water. She was released on 6 October, after serving her sentence. Previously, she was also a suspect in a criminal case against “Viasna” human rights center – a Nobel Peace Prize award-winning organization, where she used to work. However, after 6 October the investigation in which she was a suspect was dropped and the ban on her leaving the country lifted.

On 28 October, Nasta Loika was again arbitrarily detained in Minsk and on 31 October punished by 15 days in detention under the same allegations of “petty hooliganism”. Shortly after her arrest on 28 October, a “confession video” featuring Nasta Loika appeared on a Telegram channel believed to be linked to the Main Directorate for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption of the Belarusian Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Belarusian authorities have repeatedly used such video “confessions” extracted under torture and other ill-treatment or duress against government critics and activists.

Nasta Loika was not released after serving her 15-day detention on 14 November and accusations of “petty hooliganism” were again brought against her. During the online hearing, Nasta Loika reported that she had been tortured with electric shock during questioning and that she was left for eight hours in the courtyard without outerwear. She felt ill as a result of the cold temperatures. The Okrestina (Akrestina in Belarusian) detention center authorities are also refusing to deliver parcels to Nasta Loika with medicines, personal hygiene products and warm clothes that she urgently needs. Nasta Loika remained in custody for another 15 days.

Nasta Loika is a longstanding partner of Amnesty International in Belarus and a well-known human rights educator. She has committed no offence and she is being targeted in retaliation for her human rights work.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Belarusian, Russian, English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 10 January 2023

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Nasta (Anastasia) Loika (she/her)