

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST ACCUSED OF 'JUSTIFICATION OF TERRORISM'

Victor Korb, a human rights defender and journalist, is being unjustly prosecuted for "public justification of terrorism" on account of publishing the final statement of the person whose rights he defends. The charges against him should be dropped immediately.

In April 2015, a prominent Russian publicist, Boris Stomakhin, was convicted of "public justification of terrorism" for writing a blog post on 18 January 2014. Many local human rights defenders believe his guilt had not been sufficiently proved and that the punishment was overly severe. The well-known journalist and human rights defender **Victor Korb** started a campaign in support of Boris Stomakhin, calling for him to be freed. Among other things, on 21 April 2015, he published on the website *Patriofil.ru* Boris Stomakhin's final statement, in which Boris Stomakhin described the December 2013 explosions in Volgograd as "justified". The transcript of the statement was put in quotation marks by Victor Korb, who at no point expressed support for or condoned the views expressed by Boris Stomakhin.

On the morning of 18 May 2018, around ten law enforcement officers burst into Victor Korb's apartment in Omsk, Siberia's capital city, and conducted a 10-hour-long search. All computers belonging to Victor Korb and his family were seized, as were data storage devices containing his and his wife's journalistic materials. During the search he learned that, two days earlier, a criminal case had been initiated against him by the Investigation Committee's Department for the Omsk Region for "public calls to terrorist activities, public justification of terrorism or the propaganda of terrorism" (Art. 205.2 of the Criminal Code), for which if found guilty he could face seven years in prison. On 20 May 2018, Victor Korb was required to confirm in writing that he would not leave Omsk. Soon after, his own and his family's bank accounts were frozen.

On 17 June 2018, Victor Korb appealed to the Russia's Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) alleging that the initiation of the criminal case against him was unlawful. He asked the PGO to consider the lawfulness of the case at the federal level, for fear of retaliation from the regional authorities for his journalistic and peaceful human rights work. However, his appeal was transferred to the Prosecutor's Office of the Omsk Region, where it is currently being considered.

In accordance with its international obligations, Russia must ensure that journalists can carry out their function of commenting on public issues, informing public opinion, and conveying information and ideas without threats, harassment or intimidation, and are not prosecuted for expressing views that do not constitute incitement to violence.

Please write immediately in Russian, English or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to immediately drop the charges against Victor Korb as he is being prosecuted solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression as a journalist and human rights defender.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 SEPTEMBER 2018 TO:

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation

Yuriy Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, dom 15a
Moscow GSP- 3, 125993, Russia
Fax: +7 495 987 58 41 / +7 495 692 17 25
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Chairman of the Investigation Committee

Aleksandr Ivanovich Bastrykin
Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation
Tekhnicheskii pereulok, dom 2
Moscow, 105005, Russia
Fax: +7 495 966 97 76
Salutation: Dear Chairman

And copies to:

Human Rights Ombudsman of the Russian Federation
Tatiana Nikolaevna Moskalkova
ul. Miasnitskaia, dom 47
Moscow, 101000, Russia
Fax: +7 495 607 74 70 / +7 495 607 39 77
(to check if fax is received: +7 495 607 18 54)
Salutation: Dear Ombudsman

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation
Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In recent years, Amnesty International has documented numerous cases of human rights defenders and journalists facing harassment, intimidation, physical attacks, and arbitrary arrests across Russia. In many cases, they faced unfair prosecution on trumped-up charges. These cases form part of a wider and protracted pattern of crackdowns on the rights to freedom of expression and civic space.

Name: Victor Korb

Gender m/f: m

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