

RUSSIAN FEDERATION Gennady Borisovich Grechko, 23

The death sentence against Gennady Borisovich Grechko, who has possible mental health problems, is to be reviewed by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation on 7 April 1998. As far as Amnesty International is aware, the Supreme Court continues to uphold death sentences.

If the Supreme Court does decide to uphold the death penalty against Gennady Grechko his last remaining option is to appeal to the Russian President. However, President Boris Yeltsin rarely grants clemency to death penalty prisoners.

Gennady Grechko was found guilty of the murder of three people in August 1996 and sentenced to death in December 1997 by the Yaroslavl Regional Court. The delay between his conviction and his sentencing was as a result of doubts the court held regarding his mental state at the time of the crime. A psychiatric report written by the Kostroma Regional Psychiatric Hospital concluded that Gennady Grechko was not thought to be suffering from mental illness. This report was taken into account by the court prior to the initial sentencing.

However, Gennady Grechko's family believes that the hospital report is biased against him. According to the family, Gennady Grechko is mentally unstable and has a history of psychological problems, including a suicide attempt, and spent some time under observation at a psychiatric ward as a minor.

According to Gennady Grechko's mother, who has recently visited him in prison, he appears exhausted and has developed a severe stutter. The family is appealing for an independent psychological examination.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Russian Federation government committed to institute a moratorium on executions on joining the Council of Europe on 28 February 1996. A moratorium did not reportedly come into being, however, until August 1996 although no official announcement concerning this has been made by the government and courts continue to pass death sentences. As many as 140 prisoners are thought to have been executed in 1996, 103 of them after the country joined the Council of Europe.

Amnesty International is concerned that executions could easily and quickly be resumed, since the mechanism for executions remains in place.

On 27 April 1997 the government of the Russian Federation signed Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, committing itself to work towards the abolition of the death penalty, but this has yet to be ratified by parliament. According to official statistics there were 846 death penalty prisoners in the Russian Federation in October 1997.

Amnesty International is opposed to the death penalty in all cases and without reservation on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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

- urging the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation to overturn the death penalty imposed on Gennady Borisovich Grechko - please quote case number N8CK 981;
- expressing concern that despite a moratorium on executions in place since August 1996 in the light of Russian Federation's commitments to the Council of Europe made on accession, death sentences continue to be passed;
- 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;
- urging for an independent psychiatric examination of Gennady Grechko;
- urging the President of the Russian Federation to grant clemency to all death penalty prisoners and publicly to announce the existence of a moratorium on executions.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Russian Federation, YELTSIN, Boris Nikolayevich
 Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, g. Moskva, Kreml
 Presidentu Rossiyskoy Federatsii Yeltsinu B.N., RUSSIA
Telegrams: President Yeltsin, Moscow, Russia
Faxes: + 7095 206 5173
Salutation: Dear President

Chairman of the Russian Federation Supreme Court, LEBEDEV, Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich
 Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103289 g. Moskva
 ul. Ilyinka, 7/3, Verkhovny Sud Rossiyskoy Federatsii
 Predsedatelyu Lebedevu V.M., RUSSIA
Telegrams: Predsedatelyu, Verkhovny Sud, Moscow, Russia
Faxes: + 7095 202 7118
Salutation: Dear Chairman

Procurator General of the Russian Federation, SKURATOV, Yuriy
 Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103793 g. Moskva K-31,
 ul. Dimitrovka, 15a
 Prokuratura Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Generalnogo prokurora Skuratovu Yu., RUSSIA
Telegrams: Generalnomu Prokuratoru, Moscow, Russia
Faxes: + 7095 292 8848
Salutation: Dear Procurator General

COPIES TO:

Chair of the Presidential Clemency Commission, PRISTAVKIN, Anatoly Ignatyevich
 Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103012 g. Moskva
 ul. Ilinka, d. 8/4, pod 20, k. 605
 Komissiya po voprosam pomilovaniya pri Prezidente Rossii
 Predsedatelyu Pristavkinu A.I., RUSSIA
Faxes: + 7095 206 4338

Presidential Human Rights Commission of the Russian Federation, KARTASHKIN, Vladimir Alekseyvich
 Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103132 g. Moskva, Staraya ploshchad, d 8/5, pod 3
 Predsedatelju Komissii po pravam cheloveka pri Prezidente Rossiyskoy Federatsii
 Kartashkinu V.A., RUSSIA
Faxes: + 7095 206 4815

Head of the Russian Federation Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, SHOKHIN, Aleksandr

Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103009 g. Moskva, Okhotny ryad, 1

Glave Rossiyssskoy delegatsii v parlamentskoy assambley Soveta Evropy

Shokhinu A., RUSSIA

and to diplomatic representatives of Russian Federation accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 May 1998.