

EXTERNAL

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Fear of imminent execution

18 October 1995

BELARUS

I.Y. Kopytin (. . . in Russian), aged 24

Amnesty International fears that I. Kopytin faces imminent execution unless Aleksandr Lukashenko, the President of Belarus, exercises his constitutional authority to commute his death sentence.

I. Kopytin was sentenced to death for murder on 30 January 1995. His appeal against his death sentence was recently rejected by the Supreme Court of Belarus, exact date not known. A petition for clemency is pending with the President. A decision could be taken any time now.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

It is impossible to determine exactly how much time elapses between the Supreme Court of Belarus upholding a death sentence and execution taking place. However, death penalty statistics known to Amnesty International indicate that, on average, execution takes place within six months of the Supreme Court turning down an appeal if the President does not exercise his constitutional authority to commute the death sentence.

According to death penalty statistics for 1993 released by the Department for Clemency at the Supreme Soviet (parliament) of Belarus in early 1994, 16 men were executed after their petition for clemency was turned down. Only one death sentence was commuted. The Department had received a total of 21 petitions for clemency from prisoners sentenced to death. Amnesty International knows of one prisoner executed in 1995.

Amnesty International opposes 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 and airmail letters either in Russian, English or in your own language:

- expressing sympathy for the victims of violent crime, but stating your opposition to the death penalty in all cases, pointing out that it has never been shown to be an effective deterrent to such crimes;
- urging President Lukashenko to grant clemency to I. Kopytin and to commute his death sentence;
- urging President Lukashenko to commute all other death sentences that come before him.

APPEALS TO

Note: The first fax number given is the old code; if you are unable to get through on this number, please try the second number given, the new Belarus code.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko
Respublika Belarus
220010 g. Minsk
pl. Nezavisimosti
Apparat Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus
Prezidentu Respubliki Belarus LUKASHENKO A.H

Telegrams: Belarus, Minsk, Prezidentu Lukashenko A.
Faxes: + 7 0172 235825 or + 375 172 235825
Salutation: Dear President

The Head of the Department for Applications for Clemency and Citizenship at the President's Administration, name not known

Respublika Belarus
220010 g. Minsk
Apparat Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus
Otdel po voprosam pomilovaniya i grazhdanstva
Zaveduyushchemu otdelom
(i.e. to the Head of department)

Faxes: + 7 0172 235825 or + 375 172 235825

Telegrams: Belarus, Minsk, pl. Nezavisimosti, Otdel pomilovaniya, Zav.

Salutation: Dear Head of Department

COPIES TO:

The Chairman of the Supreme Court of Belarus, Vladimir S. Karavay

Respublika Belarus
220030 g. Minsk
Ul. Lenina, 28
Verkhovny Sud Respubliki Belarus
Predsedatelyu KARAVAYU V.S.

The Acting Procurator General of Belarus, Vasiliy Stepanovich KAPITAN

Respublika Belarus
220050 g. Minsk
Ul. Internatsionalnaya, 22
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Faxes: + 7 0172 264166 or + 375 172 264166

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, Ulazimir SYANKO

Respublika Belarus
220030 g.Minsk
Ul. Lenina, 19
Ministerstvo inostrannykh del
Respubliki Belarus
Ministry SYANKO U.

Faxes: + 7 0172 274521 or + 375 172 274521

and to diplomatic representatives of Belarus accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 December 1995.