

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 49/32/99

25 November 1999

Further information on UA 245/99 (EUR 49/22/99, 17 September 1999) - Possible "disappearance"

BELARUSViktor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovsky

The whereabouts of the prominent opposition leader, Viktor Gonchar, and his companion, Anatoly Krasovsky, remain unknown. The two men "disappeared" on 16 September 1999.

Amnesty International has learned that on 19 September, Viktor Gonchar had been due to deliver a report on the political situation in the country to a session of the former parliament, dissolved by President Lukashenka in 1996. Members of the session were also due to elect a delegation to take part in the talks now underway between the government and the opposition, mediated by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Amnesty International fears that his "disappearance" may have been connected with this meeting.

Members of the two men's families have publicly expressed their condemnation and grief. In a letter to the OSCE in early October 1999, Viktor Gonchar's wife, Zinaida Gonchar, reportedly wrote: "Belarusian special services had been openly shadowing Gonchar 24 hours a day since the start of the year, law enforcement bodies cannot but know his whereabouts," and added: "Because it was they who organized Gonchar's kidnaping, they do not need to search for him."

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in no preference or in your own language:

- expressing grave concern for the safety of prominent opposition leader Viktor Gonchar and his companion Anatoly Krasovsky, who have been missing since 16 September 1999;
- urging that their whereabouts are established immediately and made known to their families, and that if they are in police custody they be given immediate access to their families, and to legal representation;
- urging that they be protected from any form of torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that any new criminal charges against them are made public and that, if they are in detention, they be released immediately unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- expressing concern that Viktor Gonchar is the third prominent figure in Belarus to apparently "disappear" since April 1999 and urging that an independent investigation into his whereabouts and those of Yury Zakharenko and Tamara Vinnikova be initiated immediately, and that the results be made public.

APPEALS TO (Please mark all appeals "URGENT - SROCHNO"):

The telephone system in Belarus is unreliable and fax tones may therefore be difficult to get. Please keep trying (it can help to dial slowly), particularly during office hours as fax machines are sometimes turned off at the end of the working day (+3 hours GMT). If a voice answers, repeat "fax" until connected.

The President of Belarus, Alyaksandr LUKASHENKA
Respublika Belarus
220016 g. Minsk

ul. Karla Marksa, 38, Administratsia Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus
Presidentu Lukashenka A.H
BELARUS

Telegrams: Presidentu Lukashenka, Minsk, Belarus

Faxes: + 375 172 22 38 72 / 26 06 10

Salutation: Dear President

The Procurator General of Belarus, Aleh BOZHELKO

Respublika Belarus

220050 g. Minsk

Ul. Internatsionalnaya, 22

Prokuratura Respubliki Belarus

Generalnomu Prokuroru

BOZHELKU A., BELARUS

Telegrams: Generalnomu prokuoro, Minsk, Belarus

Faxes: + 375 172 264166

Salutation: Dear Procurator General

Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Yuriy Sivakow

Respublika Belarus, g. Minsk, Ul. Urytskaha, 5

Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del Respubliki Belarus, Ministru Sivakowu

Telegrams: Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del, Minsk, Belarus

Faxes: + 375 172 26 12 47

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, Ivan ANTONOVICH

Respublika Belarus

220030 g. Minsk

Ul. Lenina, 19

Ministerstvo inostrannykh del

Respubliki Belarus

Ministru ANTONOVICH I., BELARUS

Faxes: + 375 172 27 45 21

Salutation: Dear Minister

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 7 January 1999.