

AI Index: PRE 01/602/2011  
30 November 2011

## **Death penalty for two men in Belarus**

The two death sentences handed down in Belarus today followed a trial that has failed to meet international fair trial standards, said Amnesty International.

Dzmitry Kanavalau was convicted for committing terrorist attacks and producing explosives and Uladzslau Kavalyou for assisting him and failing to inform the authorities.

“We have serious concerns that both Dzmitry Kanavalau and Uladzslau Kavalyou were ill-treated in order to force them to confess and that this trial does not stand up to international scrutiny,” said John Dalhusien, Europe and Central Asia Deputy Programme Director.

“Belarus has a flawed justice system and routinely flouts international fair trial standards, increasing the risk of a miscarriage of justice exists and of executing an innocent person.”

During the trial, Uladzslau Kavalyou retracted his confession which he claims was obtained under pressure. He stated that during the interrogation he heard Dzmitry Kanavalau screaming and assumed that it would be his turn to be tortured next. His mother has reported that both men were beaten during interrogation. There are reports that an ambulance had to be called during the interrogation of Dzmitry Kanavalau due to the ill-treatment he had suffered.

Both men were detained on 12 April, the day after an explosion in Minsk occurred in which 15 people died and hundreds were injured. In violation of their right to the presumption of innocence, on the morning of 13 April, President Alyaksandr Lukashenka declared that two men who had been detained had confessed to carrying out the attack, as well as previous bomb attacks in Belarus. In fact, Dzmitry Kanavalau and Uladzslau Kavalyou were not questioned until later that day.

“The death penalty is irrevocable and we oppose its use in all cases. President Lukashenka should immediately declare a moratorium on the death penalty and join the growing ranks of countries that have abandoned this barbaric punishment,” said John Dalhuisen.

“The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Belarus remains the only country in Europe and the former Soviet Union which still carries out executions.”