

URGENT ACTION

BELARUSIAN PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE MISSING

The whereabouts of Belarusian prisoner of conscience Andrei Sannikau are currently unknown. Amnesty International fears he may be at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

On 16 November, one of **Andrei Sannikau's** lawyers attempted to visit him in the prison colony where he is serving his sentence. The lawyer was told that Andrei Sannikau was not at the colony, but no further explanation was offered as to what might have happened to him. His family also do not know where he is. His lawyers fear that he has been moved to another detention facility. In September, Andrei Sannikau and another prisoner of conscience, Zmitser Dashkevich, were repeatedly moved from one prison to another. Amnesty International fears that Andrei Sannikau is once again being subjected to transportation as a way of putting pressure on him to force him to confess, or to punish him for his political views. The organization also fears that he may face torture or other ill-treatment at the hands of cellmates, or prison staff, since during transportation in September he faced death threats from cellmates. During transportation prisoners are subjected to long periods of travel in extremely poor conditions often in extreme cold or heat without proper food and drink. It is unprecedented for prisoners to be subjected to such frequent transportation, as even in cases where a prisoner's life is at stake, the authorities are very reluctant to move prisoners.

Amnesty International has no new information on political activist **Zmitser Dashkevich**, who is serving a two-year sentence for allegedly attacking passers-by just before the December 2010 presidential election in Belarus. Opposition presidential candidate Andrei Sannikau was sentenced in May to five years in prison for taking part in post-election demonstrations. Amnesty International believes that the charges against both men, and at least four others, are unfounded, and that they have been targeted for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of assembly and expression.

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

- Calling on the Belarusian authorities to immediately inform Andrei Sannikau's lawyers and family where he is being held;
- Reminding the Belarusian authorities that Andrei Sannikau is a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for the peaceful expression of his political views and that he should be released immediately and unconditionally, along with all other prisoners of conscience held in connection with demonstrations in December 2010;
- Reminding the Belarusian authorities that they have a duty to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of those in custody, this includes a duty to protect prisoners from attacks by third parties as well as state agents;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that he is not tortured or ill-treated by state officials or third parties.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 DECEMBER 2011 TO:

General Prosecutor

Alexander Vladimirovich Koniuk

Internatsionalnaya str. 22

220050 Minsk, BELARUS

Fax: +375 17 226 42 52

Salutation: Dear General Prosecutor

Minister of Internal Affairs

Anatoly Kuleshov

Ul. Gorodskoi Val 2.

220050 Minsk, Belarus

Fax: +375 17 203 99 18

Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 299/11. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR49/019/2011/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In September 2011 Andrei Sannikau, and another prisoner of conscience, Zmitser Dashkevich, were subjected to over 10 days of being transported from one prison colony to another. Between 20 and 26 September, Andrei Sannikau's lawyer had not been informed of his client's whereabouts. At a press conference, his wife, Iryna Khalip, reported that Andrei Sannikau had been threatened by cellmates held in the city of Vitebsk, who stated "We don't intend to kill you, but.....you may be transferred to another cell, where you may be beaten or even killed. Prisoners kill each other. It happens."

Amnesty International is continuing to ask for the release of the remaining prisoners of conscience who were sentenced in connection with the demonstration in December 2010. The other remaining prisoners are:

Zmitser Bandarenka, sentenced to 2 years on 26 March

Eduard Lobau, sentenced to 4 years on 24 March

Pavel Sevyarynets, sentenced to 3 years on 16 May

Mykalau Statkevich, sentenced to 6 years on 26 May

Another prisoner of conscience, Dzmitry Uss, was sentenced to five and a half years' imprisonment in May 2011, was released on 1 October.

Name: Andrei Sannikau

Gender: m

Name: Zmitser Dashkevich

Gender: m

Further information on UA: 299/11 Index: EUR 49/022/2011 Issue Date: 16 November 2011

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