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Human Rights Case Sheet: Youth Leader in pre-trial detention

Name: Mikita Sasim**Age:** 20**Charges:** draft evasion, for which he faces up to three years' imprisonment.**Prison:** Baranavichy pre-trial detention centre 6 in Belarus

Belarusian youth leader, Mikita Sasim, is currently being detained in Baranavichy pre-trial detention centre 6 in Belarus on charges of draft evasion. On 4 May, he will be tried in the court of Baranavichy, and if convicted, he faces up to three years' imprisonment. Mikita has expressed his willingness to do his military service, and Amnesty International believes that his arrest is the latest incident in a series of actions by the Belarusian authorities aimed at intimidating Mikita Sasim because of his political activities in the pro-democracy and human rights movements. If he

is sentenced, AI will consider him a prisoner of conscience.

Mikita Sasim was arrested on 14 March, five days before the presidential elections in Belarus. He was reportedly seized by security forces in the street in Minsk and taken to a police station where, as a result of ill-health, an ambulance was called. That night, Mikita Sasim was operated on for appendicitis. The following day, he was reportedly transferred, handcuffed, to Baranavichy prison, where he was chained to a bed that was guarded by a policeman. After a week, Mikita Sasim was reportedly transferred to the pre-trial detention centre, where he has remained.

At a peaceful demonstration in September 2005, Mikita Sasim tied his denim shirt to a flag pole after security forces had confiscated the banners and flags being used by the demonstrators. In response, Mikita Sasim was reportedly beaten by the security forces so badly that he spent a week in hospital recovering. He was subsequently granted a deferment of military service due to the brain injury that he had incurred as a result of the beating. Mikita Sasim's peaceful act of defiance, which led to his beating, inspired the adoption of denim blue as a symbol of freedom and liberation by Belarusian civil society. The same colour was subsequently adopted by the political opposition in the run up to the presidential elections to the extent that even the international media began to refer to 'the denim revolution'.

Action!

Please send cards and letters of support and solidarity to Mikita Sasim in the days leading up to his trial on 4 May. You can write in Belarusian, Russian, English or your own language. Your good wishes will be an invaluable source of support and strength for Mikita Sasim at this difficult time. Please send your greetings to:

Mikita Sasim
Cell 8, Pre-trial detention centre No. 6
Brestskaya Street, 258a
Baranavichy
Brest region 225320, Belarus

A casesheet on Mikita Sasim prepared by Amnesty International UK giving the full details of his case is available at: http://www.amnesty.org.uk/images/ul/B/Belarus_2.pdf.