

AI Index: PRE01/229/2010  
08 July 2010

## **Russian scientist could face forcible exile**

Amnesty International has said any deal over the release of a nuclear scientist, Igor Sutyagin, which requires him to leave Russia against his wishes will amount to forcible exile, which is prohibited under international law.

Igor Sutyagin is reportedly being taken to the UK as one of a number of people convicted of spying in Russia who are being exchanged for 10 or 11 individuals alleged by the US to be Russian spies.

“If Igor Sutyagin is opposed to this “deal” and had to accept it under pressure, it may amount to forcible exile,” said Nicola Duckworth, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director.

“It will also deprive him of the chance to clear his name of the charges he has been convicted of in a retrial that is in compliance with international standards for fairness. It will also deprive him of his contacts with family and friends.”

Igor Sutyagin’s mother told Amnesty International that he has opposed this deal but was coerced to accept it.

*“He understands that by signing a confession of his guilt, he is losing all chances for a fair trial of his case, including a hearing of his case pending at the European Court of Human Rights. That’s why he asked me to pass on to everyone that he is not guilty. He had to sign this confession as he had no other options. He looks at his swap as an expulsion from the country,”* said Svetlana Sutiagina.

His case was highlighted by Amnesty International in 2004 in connection with concerns over freedom of expression and fair trial.

Igor Sutyagin compiled information on military and defence issues in Russia, while working as a private consultant for UK-based Alternative Futures consultancy. He was found guilty in 2004 of "high treason by means of espionage" and was sentenced to 15 years in a strict regime penal colony.

He has always claimed that he had used open public sources only, and always denied guilt in the charges espionage and divulging state secrets.

The case against Igor Sutyagin was initiated by Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB).

Amnesty International believes that the case against him was politically motivated and part of a clampdown on the freedom of expression in Russia that has progressed in recent years to include academic and cultural figures as well as religious groups.

The proceedings against Igor Sutyagin were marred by violations of international fair trial standards. Amnesty International has called for his prompt retrial. For a number of years, Amnesty International has voiced concerns about the shrinking space for expressing dissenting views, and for independent media and independent non-governmental organizations to operate throughout the Russian Federation.

The organization is concerned about the further encroachments on the right to freedom of expression in Russia.

**See also:**

[Joint statement on the case of Igor Sutiagin](#), June 2004