

URGENT ACTION

ALIAKSEI MIKHALENYA AT RISK OF IMMINENT EXECUTION

Aliaksei Mikhalenya was sentenced to death by the Homel Regional Court, in southeast Belarus, on 17 March. His sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court on 30 June and he is now at risk of imminent execution.

Aliaksei Mikhalenya was sentenced to death by the Homel Regional Court, in southeast Belarus, on 17 March 2017. He was found guilty of two murders in March 2016. He was arrested shortly after and filed a full confession.

On 30 June, the Supreme Court denied Aliaksei Mikhalenya's appeal and upheld his death sentence. Aliaksei Mikhalenya was later transferred to the pre-trial detention centre (SIZO) #1 in Minsk where death row inmates are kept and death sentences are believed to be executed. He is at risk of imminent execution.

In Belarus no warning is given of the date or time of execution and no final meeting with relatives is granted. Death row inmates are executed with a shot to the back of the head. In accordance with Belarusian law, their bodies are not returned to their families for burial, nor is the location of the burial site disclosed.

Belarus is the only country in Europe and Central Asia which continues to use the death penalty.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception. It violates the right to life, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

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

- Urging President Alyaksandr Lukashenka to commute the death sentence of Aliaksei Mikhalenya and all those on death row in Belarus;
- Calling on the President to establish an immediate moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty;
- Stress that whilst we are not seeking to downplay the seriousness of the crime, research shows that the death penalty does not deter crime more than imprisonment, and is the ultimate denial of human rights.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 AUGUST 2017 TO:

President

Alyaksandr Lukashenka

Vul. Karla Marksa 38

220016 Minsk, Belarus

Fax: +375 17 226 06 10

+375 17 222 38 72

Email: contact@president.gov.by

Salutation: Dear President

Lukashenka

And copies to:

Human Rights Centre Vyasna

Vul. Merzhinkovo, 8-26

220012, Minsk, Belarus

Email: viasna@spring96.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR SERGEI ALEINIK Embassy of the Republic of Belarus, 6 Kensington Court W8 5DL, 020 7937 3288, Fax 020 7361 0005, uk.london@mfa.gov.by, www.uk.mfa.gov.by

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Aliaksei Mikhalenya allegedly murdered two people on 4 March 2016 after having a fight with them. He had recently been released from prison having served a separate sentence for murder. On 5 March, the police detained Aliaksei Mikhalenya and he offered a full confession. According to his lawyers, there were concerns about possible procedure violations during his initial trial. The Homel Regional Court found him guilty on 17 March 2017. Mikhalenya appealed this sentence but the Supreme Court of Belarus denied the motion and upheld it on 30 June 2017.

Death sentences are often imposed in Belarus after unfair trials which include forced confessions; they are implemented in strict secrecy and without giving adequate notice to the condemned prisoners themselves, their families or legal representatives. The authorities refuse to return the bodies of those executed to their relatives or even tell them where they are buried. Executions are carried out despite requests from the UN Human Rights Committee to the government not to do so until the Committee has considered the cases. In November 2012, the Human Rights Committee found that the application of the death penalty in Belarus violates the human rights of those condemned and their families.

By failing to publish full information about the use of the death penalty, including comprehensive statistics about the number of death sentences imposed and executions carried out, the Belarusian authorities prevent informed public debate about the issue and hamper the movement towards abolition.

As of today, 140 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice.

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