

URGENT ACTION

TATAR ACTIVIST AND PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE RELEASED

On 27 December 2017, Tatar activist Rafis Kashapov was released from prison after having served the full three-year sentence for his criticism of Russia's involvement in the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine and the treatment of Crimean Tatars in the annexed Crimea. Amnesty International recognised the activist as a prisoner of conscience while he was in detention.

On 27 December 2017, **Rafis Kashapov**, head of the Naberezhnye Chelny branch of the NGO Tatar Public Centre, was released from prison after having served the full three-year sentence given to him by the Naberezhnye Chelny City Court, in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia, on 15 September 2015.

Rafis Kashapov had been in detention since 28 December 2014, when officials of the Federal Security Service of Tatarstan conducted a search of his flat and confiscated his computer and other electronic devices. He was charged with and later found guilty of calling for actions which "threaten the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation" (Article 280.1 of the Russian Criminal Code) and "instigating hatred or hostility and the abasement of human dignity" (Article 282). These charges stem from the publication of several articles on his personal page on VKontakte (a popular Russian social media site) following the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014. In his articles, he sharply criticised the Russian government's involvement in the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine and the treatment of Crimean Tatars in the annexed Crimea.

During his time in prison, Rafis Kashapov published open letters detailing the torture and ill-treatment to which prisoners were being subjected to in pre-trial detention centre (SIZO-1) in Kazan, southwest Russia, and degrading conditions in a prison hospital in the Republic of Komi where he was transferred, following some health concerns.

Rafis Kashapov unsuccessfully appealed his prison sentence before the Supreme Court of Tatarstan on 13 November 2015. On 11 January 2016, he complained to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) against the violation of his right to liberty and security (Article 5 of the European Convention of Human Rights) and freedom of expression (Article 10 of the Convention). On 12 January 2018 it was reported that the ECtHR had communicated the complaint to the Russian government which has until 4 May 2018 to respond.

Thank you to all those who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the fourth update of UA 12/15. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/3889/2016/en/

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