

URGENT ACTION

RUSSIA MUST RELEASE UKRAINIAN FILM DIRECTOR

Ukrainian film director, Oleg Sentsov started a hunger strike on 14 May, calling for the release of ‘all Ukrainian political prisoners’ who are currently being held by the Russian Federation. Oleg Sentsov is serving a 20-year prison sentence following an unfair trial on politically-motivated charges. Amnesty International is calling for his immediate release.

In a note passed through his lawyer, Ukrainian film director **Oleg Sentsov** declared on 16 May that he, ‘a Ukrainian citizen unlawfully convicted by a Russian court and serving [his] sentence in a penal colony in Labytngani, declare[s] an indefinite hunger strike, as of 14 May 2018.’ He says he will end his strike only on the condition that ‘all Ukrainian political prisoners’ who are currently being held by the Russian Federation are released.

Since he began the strike, Oleg Sentsov has been transferred to a separate cell where his health is regularly being monitored by prison medical staff. According to the lawyer, Oleg Sentsov’s health is stable and he has no complaints at this point about the penal colony staff’s treatment towards him, or the prison conditions. On 31 May, 16 days into the hunger strike, Russian politician, Ksenia Sobchak had a video-call with Oleg Sentsov during which she tried to convince him to end his hunger strike; he refused. Ksenia Sobchak described the film director as looking ‘very bad; he [has] lost weight; his cheeks are funnelled; he looks pale, but is very confident in his decision.’ On 4 June, Oleg Sentsov’s lawyer reported that Oleg Sentsov has lost 8 kilograms since he went on hunger strike and that prison doctors have warned him that if he continues the strike he would be at grave risk of kidney failure and in that event subject to force feeding.

The film director was sentenced on 25 August 2015 to 20 years imprisonment for allegedly setting up a branch of a ‘terrorist group’ and organizing ‘terrorist acts’ in April 2014. He maintains his innocence. He was convicted in a military court in the Russian Federation, following a grossly unfair trial, on politically-motivated charges and his conviction was based on “confessions” obtained under torture. Amnesty International is calling for his immediate release.

Please write immediately in Russian, English or your own language urging the authorities:

- To immediately release Oleg Sentsov;
- To ensure that any and all medical treatment provided to Oleg Sentsov is done in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy and informed consent, and that no unwanted treatment or force feeding is executed which may amount to torture and other ill-treatment;
- To fully respect and protect the right to freedom of expression.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 AUGUST 2018 TO:

President of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin
Ul. Ilyinka, 23
103132 Moscow,
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 9102134
Twitter: @KremlinRussia

Salutation: Dear President

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation

Yuriy Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
Ul. B. Dmitrovka d.15a
125993 Moscow GSP-3
Russian Federation
Fax: +7495 987 58 41/ +7495 692 17

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

And copies to:

Human Rights Ombudsman of the Russian Federation

Tatiana Nikolayevna Moskalkova
ul. Miasnitskaia, 47
107084, Moscow
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 607 7470 / +7 495 607 3977

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR ALEXANDER VLADIMIROVICH YAKOVENKO, Embassy of Russia, 6-7 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8 4QP, 020 7229 6412

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 170/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/2325/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Oleg Sentsov's co-defendant, Aleksandr Kolchenko was also sentenced on 25 August 2015 by a military court in Russia, following a grossly unfair trial, to 10 years in prison for "committing terrorist acts". On 31 May, he went on hunger strike demanding the release of fellow activist, Oleg Sentsov. Amnesty International continues to call on the authorities to take immediate steps to review Aleksandr Kolchenko's case, overturn his convictions under false or disproportionate terrorism-related charges and – based on the review – either ensure he is released or that he receives a fair trial before a civilian court, under appropriate charges.

Amnesty International has on numerous occasions raised concerns about the violation of the right to a fair trial in Russia. Torture and other ill-treatment are endemic in the Russian criminal justice system. Independent trial monitors report systematic violations of the right to a fair trial at criminal and administrative hearings. Our long-standing concerns are epitomized in the case of Aleksandr Eivazov, former Secretary of the October District Court in St Petersburg and also a whistle-blower; he was arrested on 22 August 2017, for purportedly "interfering in the work of the court", on account of his refusal to sign and backdate records of a court hearing that someone else compiled. He had been a witness to numerous violations of court procedures, judicial ethics and workers' rights in the court, and had sent complaints about all violations to the authorities and shared this information on social media. Aleksandr Eivazov's complaints are not known to have been addressed. He remains in detention, despite his deteriorating health, and is a prisoner of conscience. For more information see [FU UA 228/17](#).

Name: Oleg Sentsov

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 170/15 Index: EUR 46/8528/2018 Issue Date: 6 June 2018