

# URGENT ACTION

## BELARUS' LAST PRISONER ON DEATH ROW AT RISK

**Siarhei Vostrykau is the last known prisoner on death row in Belarus after the authorities executed the other remaining three prisoners on death row on 5 November. Siarhei Vostrykau is at imminent risk of execution.**

**Siarhei Vostrykau**, (aged 33) was sentenced to death on 19 May, having been found guilty of two separate cases of rape and murder. The Supreme Court of Belarus upheld his death sentence on 4 October. Siarhei Vostrykau was accused of killing two of his female colleagues, the first in July 2014 and the second in July 2015.

Siarhei Vostrykau is the last prisoner on death row in Belarus, after the authorities executed Siarhei Khmialeuski, Ivan Kulesh and Hyanadz Yakavitski on 5 November. He is at imminent risk of execution.

In Belarus, no warning is given about the time or date of execution. The families of Ivan Kulesh, Siarhey Khmialeuski and Hyanadz Yakavitski have only been informed of their executions in the past few days – weeks after the actual executions took place. In accordance with Belarusian law, the bodies of their loved ones will not be returned to them for burial, nor will the location of the burial site be 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 Belarusian, Russian or your own language:**

- Urging President Lukashenka to halt the execution of Siarhei Vostrykau and immediately commute his death sentence;
- Calling on President Lukashenka 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 other forms of imprisonment and is the ultimate denial of human rights.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 JANUARY 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](mailto:contact@president.gov.by)

**Salutation: Dear President  
Lukashenka**

#### Head of the Supreme Court

Valyantsin Alehovich Sukala  
Vul. Lenina 28  
220030 Minsk, Belarus  
Fax: +375 (17) 327-12-25  
(Say "fax" clearly if voice answers)  
Email: [supreme@court.by](mailto:supreme@court.by)

**Salutation: Dear Head of the Supreme  
Court**

#### **And copies to:**

#### Prosecutor General

Alyaksandr Kaniuk  
Vul. Internatsionalnaya 22  
220050 Minsk, Belarus  
Fax: +375 17 226 42 52 (Say "fax"  
clearly if voice answers)  
Email: [info@prokuratura.gov.by](mailto:info@prokuratura.gov.by)

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HIS EXCELLENCY MR SERGEI ALEINIK Embassy of the Republic of Belarus, Kensington Court W8 5DL, 020 7937 3288, Fax 020 7361 0005, [uk.london@mfa.gov.by](mailto:uk.london@mfa.gov.by), [www.uk.mfa.gov.by](http://www.uk.mfa.gov.by)

**Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.** This is the first update of UA 134/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR49/4198/2016/en/>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have issued statements this year urging Belarus to respect the right to life for each of its citizens and to join a global moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its full abolition. Its continued use stands in direct opposition to any intended progress of Belarus' parliamentary working group on the prospect of abolishing the death penalty which was established in February 2010 and which continues to report to international observers on the use of the death penalty in Belarus.

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. Three more countries - Fiji, Madagascar and Suriname - became abolitionist for all crimes in 2015.

Further information on UA: 134/16 Index: EUR 49/5274/2016 Issue Date: 5 December 2016