

URGENT ACTION

LIBRARIAN'S CASE SENT BACK FOR INVESTIGATION

On 15 August, the Moscow Prosecutor General's office refused to sign the indictment against Natalya Sharina and the case was sent back for further investigation. It is expected that Natalya Sharina's house arrest will be extended on 26 August. She is a prisoner of conscience.

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Natalya Sharina, the Director of the state-run Library of Ukrainian Literature, has been under house arrest since 30 October 2015 after investigators allegedly found "extremist literature" in a pile of books in the library that had not been indexed or made available for borrowers. On 5 April 2016, weeks before her house arrest was due to expire, she was charged with embezzlement for allegedly misappropriating library funds (an offence that is classified as a serious crime and carries a maximum prison sentence of 10 years) and her house arrest was extended until July. On 27 July her detention was again prolonged until 29 of August.

Natalya Sharina suffers from high blood pressure and repeated requests for her to be allowed to take walks outside for health reasons, have been denied. She only has contact with her lawyer and the close relatives she lives with and cannot use the internet or the telephone, except to call an ambulance. Natalya Sharina's daughter explained that her health is deteriorating and that she is not being allowed access to adequate medical treatment.

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

- Welcoming the decision of the Moscow Prosecutor's Office not to approve Natalya Sharina's indictment and calling on the authorities to terminate unfounded criminal proceedings against her;
- Calling on the Russian authorities to release Natalya Sharina immediately and unconditionally as she has been detained solely for peacefully exercising her rights;
- Urging them to ensure unimpeded access to health services while she is still being held under house arrest.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 OCTOBER 2016 TO:

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation

Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a
125993 Moscow GSP- 3
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 987 5841 / +7 495 692 1725

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Chairman of the Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation

Aleksandr Ivanovich Bastrykin
Tekhnicheskii pereulok, dom 2
105005 Moscow
Russian Federation
Fax: +7499 265 9077 / +7499 265 9775

Salutation: Dear Chairman

Human Rights Ombudsman of the Russian Federation

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

(to check if fax received: +7 495 607 1854)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

MR ALEXANDER V. YAKOVENKO, Embassy of the Russian Federation (Residence of the Ambassador), 13 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8 4QX Tel: 020 7229 3620 or 020 7792 1408 Email info@rusemb.org.uk Salutation Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 261/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR46/3849/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Natalya Sharina has been working as a librarian since 1981 after having graduated from the faculty of philology of the Far East State University in Vladivostok. In 1986 she and her family moved to Moscow where she continued her work in various libraries. In 2006 she was appointed as the Director of the state-run Library of Ukrainian Literature in Moscow.

The investigation against Natalya Sharina was started in October 2015 following a complaint by a former employee of the library who was dismissed in 2010. Natalya Sharina was initially charged under anti-extremism legislation for allegedly distributing printed materials with "anti-Russian and anti-Russian state propaganda" after investigators allegedly found works by Ukrainian nationalist Dmitry Korchinsky in a pile of books that had not yet been indexed or made available to borrowers. Natalya Sharina denied these belonged to the library and claims they had been secretly planted there by some law enforcement officials.

On 5 April 2016, Natalya Sharina was charged with embezzlement for having allegedly misappropriated library funds to pay for a lawyer to defend her during a previous unfounded attempt to prosecute in 2011-2013. The funds she allegedly used were those the library paid as salaries to its staff lawyers. Her current lawyer claims that this charge is baseless, both because she paid her legal expenses using her own money, and because the library's lawyers were not licensed to represent her in court.

Reportedly, during a court hearing on 27 July the judge asked Natalya Sharina why she was so unhappy about the house arrest adding that "I had [other] women prisoners here jumping with joy when they were given house arrest." The judge further remarked that "this time will be counted in anyway" in Natalya Sharina's sentence. This remark left Natalya Sharina family and supporters wondering whether the decision in her case had already been taken.

There are serious concerns about Natalya Sharina's health and access to adequate medical treatment. Natalya Sharina's daughter told Amnesty International that her mother must have an operation on her spine. For it to go ahead she needs access to her MRI scans which are being held in the Moscow Tagansky District court since 30 October 2015 when Natalya Sharina first applied for a permission to have walks. In June 2016 Natalya Sharina applied to the Court requesting the scans. However, the court secretary refused to give the scans to her on the grounds that "all staff is on leave".

Name: Natalya Sharina

Gender m/f: f