

URGENT ACTION

BELARUS ISSUES THIRD DEATH SENTENCE IN 2016

Siarhei Vostrykau was sentenced to death by the Homel Regional Court on 19 May. He is the third person to be sentenced to death in Belarus this year.

Siarhei Vostrykau (aged 33) was found guilty on 19 May of two separate cases of rape and murder. He was convicted of killing two of his female colleagues, the first in July 2014 and the second in July 2015. Allegedly, Siarhei Vostrykau offered to drive the women to work but instead took them to a garage where he raped and murdered them, and buried their bodies in a forest. Siarhei Vostrykau will appeal against the sentence.

Despite mounting national and international pressure on Belarus to abolish the death penalty, this is the third time in 2016 that a person has been sentenced to death in Belarus. Siarhei Ivanou was executed on the night of 18 April and this was the first execution known to have taken place since November 2014. In Belarus, death row prisoners are executed with a shot to the back of the head. Families are not given prior notice of the date of execution or granted a final visit. In accordance with Belarusian law, the bodies are not returned to the family for burial and the burial site is not disclosed.

Belarus is the only country in Europe and Central Asia which continues to apply the death penalty. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, as a violation of 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 all planned executions in Belarus and immediately commute the death sentence of Siarhei Vostrykau and all others sentenced to death in Belarus;
- Calling on him to establish an immediate moratorium on executions with a view to abolition of the death penalty;
- Urging him to end the secrecy surrounding the death penalty and take steps to repeal Article 175 of the Belarusian Criminal Executive Code to allow bodies of executed prisoners to be returned to families for burial or the burial site to be disclosed.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 JULY 2016 TO:

President

Alyaksandr Lukashenka
Vul. Karla Marxa 38
220016 Minsk
Belarus
Fax: +375 17 226 06 10
+375 17 222 38 72
Email: contact@president.gov.by
Salutation: Dear President

And copies to:

Prosecutor General

Alyaksandr Kaniuk
Vul. Internatsionalnaya 22
220050 Minsk
Belarus
Fax: +375 17 226 42 52 (say "fax" clearly
if someone answers)
Email: 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

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**



URGENT ACTION

BELARUS ISSUES THIRD DEATH SENTENCE IN 2016

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. The working group 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.

The Belarusian authorities argue that there is strong public support for the death penalty in Belarus. However, 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.

UA: 134/16 Index: EUR 49/4198/2016 Issue Date: 3 June 2016