

URGENT ACTION

DETENTION OF TATAR ACTIVIST EXTENDED

The detention of Tatar rights activist Rafis Kashapov has been extended until 27 April. There are concerns about his health and prison conditions.

During the court hearing on 26 February the detention of **Rafis Kashapov**, Director of the Naberezhnye Chelny branch of the NGO Tatar Public Center, in the Republic of Tatarstan, was extended until 27 April. Additionally, his lawyer and family were informed that in December 2014 Rafis Kashapov had also been charged under Article 280(2) of the Criminal Code (public calls to extremism using mass media).

Rafis Kashapov was detained at his home by ten armed men in civilian clothing on 28 December 2014. He was taken to the pre-trial detention facility (SIZO) No.1 in Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, where he has been held since. After his detention, the family received a notification from the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Tatarstan stating that a criminal case had been opened against him for alleged "instigation of hatred or hostility and the abasement of human dignity" (Article 282(1) of the Criminal Code). The Investigative Committee later specified that the criminal charges against him related to four posts on his personal page on VKontakte (a popular Russian social media). In these posts, Rafis Kashapov harshly criticized President Vladimir Putin and the Russian government for their policies towards Ukraine and denounced persecution of ethnic Crimean Tatars in the occupied Crimea.

On 19 January Rafis Kashapov went on hunger strike (which he has since ended) in protest against his arrest and unlawful prosecution. A member of the local Public Monitoring Commission (an independent mechanism providing prison visits) who had seen him in SIZO told Amnesty International that the activist was suffering from a pre-existing medical condition and complained of being subjected to pressure by a number of law enforcement officials. According to Rafis Kashapov's wife, although he is not currently on hunger strike, his health keeps deteriorating.

Please write immediately in Russian or your own language:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Rafis Kashapov, stressing that he has been detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Pending his release, ensure that he is given an immediate access to adequate medical care, in accordance with the international rules on the treatment of prisoners;
- Respect the right to freedom of expression of all individuals in the Russian Federation

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 APRIL 2015 TO:

Head of Investigation Directorate
Investigative Committee of the Republic of
Tatarstan

Pavel Nikolaev
Ulitsa Bolshaya Krasnaya, 39
Kazan 420015
Republic of Tatarstan
Russian Federation

E-mail: orgotdel_16@mail.ru

Fax: 011 7 843 221 7405

**Salutation: Dear Head of the Investigation
Directorate**

**Chairman of the Investigative Committee
of the Russian Federation**

Aleksandr Bastrykin
Tekhnicheskii Pereulok, d.2
Moscow 105005
Russian Federation

Fax: 011 7 499 265 9077

Salutation: Dear Chairman

And copies to:

Kazan, pre-trial detention facility No.1
Fax: 011 7 843 231 7326

Also send copies to:

Ambassador Sergey I. Kislyak, Embassy of the Russian Federation
2650 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington DC 20007

Phone: 1 202 298 5700 | Fax: 1 202 298 5735 | Email: embassy@russianembassy.org

Please let us know if you took action so that we can track our impact! **EITHER** send a short email to uan@aiusa.org with "UA 12/15" in the subject line, and include in the body of the email the number of letters and/or emails you sent, **OR** fill out this [short online form](#) (press Ctrl + click on link) to let us know how you took action. Thank you for taking action! Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 12/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/001/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is not the first time Rafis Kashapov has been reprimanded for his writings. In a previous trial in 2009, in which he was found guilty under the same Article 282 of the Criminal Code for his writings, he was not imprisoned but was given a conditional sentence.

Rafis Kashapov's critical posts in social media fall within the scope of the right to freedom of expression and do not amount to advocacy of hatred according to international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Russia is a party. Moreover, even if his statements could be considered defamatory, defamation should not be a criminal offence.

Amnesty International has documented repeated recent instances in which Russian activists were harassed by the authorities, arrested and in some cases criminally prosecuted for expressing solidarity with Ukraine and opposing Russian occupation and annexation of Crimea (for instance, see UA 254/14

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/049/2014/en>, UA 64/14

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/022/2014/en> and the report *Russian Federation: A right, not a crime: violations of the right to freedom of assembly in Russia*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/028/2014/en>).

Name: Rafis Kashapov (m)

Issues: Freedom of expression, Health concern, Harsh prison conditions

Further information on UA: 12/15 (21 January 2015)

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