

URGENT ACTION

HEALTH CONCERNS FOR JAILED BELARUSIAN ACTIVIST

23-year old Belarusian activist, Dzmitry Paliyenka, is serving a two-year prison sentence for peacefully opposing restrictions on cyclists. He is being exposed to conditions that exacerbate his asthma and denied medical treatment for an untreated wound. He is a prisoner of conscience.

In October 2016, activist **Dzmitry Paliyenka** was found guilty of “violence or threat of violence against an employee of law enforcement agencies” and “production and distribution of pornographic materials or items of pornographic character” and given a two-year prison sentence. The charges were trumped-up, and related to a cycling event which took place in Minsk, the Belarusian capital, on 29 April 2016 to peacefully protest against restrictions on cyclists. Since his arrival in prison in April 2017, Amnesty International has received consistent reports that Dzmitry Paliyenka has been singled out by the prison authorities and subject to harsh treatment. He is spending 10 days each month in solitary confinement and has had his monthly spending allowance cut by one third. Mail posted to him is being withheld and some of his letters are not being sent. His friends held a solidarity card-writing campaign for him at the end of December 2017, over the New Year period, but he has not received a single card. Fellow inmates are being discouraged from talking to him and those who do, have also been subjected to punishment by the prison authorities.

It is extremely difficult for Dzmitry Paliyenka to communicate with the outside world as his meetings with his lawyer and father, as well as all his mail, are monitored and censored by the prison authorities. Despite this, he has made clear that he received a wound to his leg about two months ago which has not healed and that the prison doctor is refusing to treat it. It is not clear how he received the wound. Dzmitry Paliyenka also suffers from asthma. The prison authorities have placed him in work which involves being around a lot of dust and this has exacerbated his asthma. It is not clear if he is receiving adequate medical treatment for his worsening asthma but those close to him are concerned that he is not.

Dzmitry Paliyenka is serving a two-year prison sentence in Babruisk, approximately 100km south east of Minsk. He is a prisoner of conscience who has been imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Urging the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Dzmitry Paliyenka, as is a prisoner of conscience, targeted solely for his peaceful activism;
- Pending his release, calling on the authorities to provide Dzmitry Paliyenka with access to all health care he may require and ensure that he is not placed in conditions that will exacerbate his health problems;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that Dzmitry Paliyenka is able to enjoy all legal safeguards in detention - including regular contact with his family and access to, and opportunity to speak confidentially with, his lawyer.

Contact these two officials by 20 April, 2018:

Head of Penal Colony #2

Yury Trutko
Penal colony #2
Vul. Sikorskaha, 1
9th Detachment
Babruisk 212800
Belarus

Salutation: Dear Mr. Trutko

Chargé d’Affaires Mr. Pavel Shidlovsky, Embassy of Belarus

1619 New Hampshire Ave NW, Washington DC 20009

Phone: 1 202 986 1606 | Fax: 1 202 986 1805

Email: usa@mfa.gov.by

Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 54.18*

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to human rights organisations who were monitoring the cycling event, soon after it started, police tried to stop the event using indiscriminate and excessive force against the participants. A number of cyclists were forced into a police vehicle where they reported being kicked and forced to the floor, having their bikes thrown on top of them and being made to remain there until they reached the police station. Dzmitry Paliyenka was accused of tearing a police officer's jacket. He was the only participant who faced criminal charges. He remained in detention for five months until his trial took place in October 2016. During his trial the police officer conceded that he could not be sure that his jacket had actually been torn by Dmitry Paliyenka and no other witnesses were able to testify against him. Dzmitry Paliyenka was found guilty of the charges and given a two-year sentence, which was deferred for two years with conditions. Dzmitry Paliyenka appealed the decision before the Minsk City Court, but the deferred sentence was upheld on 27 December 2016.

On 10 and 20 March 2017, Dzmitry Paliyenka was sentenced to seven and fifteen days' administrative detention, respectively. The first administrative penalty related to a court hearing on 10 March 2017 which Dzmitry Paliyenka attended as an observer. When the verdict was given, he and other trial observers shouted "shame" for which the court charged him in accordance with Articles 17.1 and 23.4 of the Belarusian Code of Administrative Offences ("minor hooliganism" and "disobedience to lawful police demands", respectively).

The second administrative penalty related to his peaceful protest on 25 February 2017 against the construction of a business centre in Minsk. He was detained on 20 March 2017 and charged according to Article 23.34, part 3 of the Belarusian Code of Administrative Offences ("organizing or participating in unsanctioned mass events"). He was sentenced to 15 days' administrative arrest. Despite serving his full fifteen day sentence, he was not released. Instead, his detention was extended for a further 10 days for reasons that have not been publicly disclosed. The authorities claimed that Dzmitry Paliyenka had violated the conditions of his deferred sentence, including because of the two administrative offences mentioned above. On 7 April 2017, Zavodski District court in Minsk cancelled the deferral of the two-year sentence which then came into force. Taking into account the time Dzmitry Paliyenka had already spent in detention, he was required to serve the remaining 18 months and three days in prison, until October 2018.

Name: Dzmitry Paliyenka
Gender m/f: male

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