

URGENT ACTION

RUSSIA MUST RELEASE UKRAINIAN FILM DIRECTOR

Ukrainian film director, Oleg Sentsov started a hunger strike on 14 May, calling for the release of ‘all Ukrainian political prisoners’ who are currently being held by the Russian Federation. Oleg Sentsov is serving a 20-year prison sentence following an unfair trial on politically-motivated charges. Amnesty International is calling for his immediate release.

In a note passed through his lawyer, Ukrainian film director **Oleg Sentsov** declared on 16 May that he, ‘a Ukrainian citizen unlawfully convicted by a Russian court and serving [his] sentence in a penal colony in Labytangi, declare[s] an indefinite hunger strike, as of 14 May 2018.’ He says he will end his strike only on the condition that ‘all Ukrainian political prisoners’ who are currently being held by the Russian Federation are released.

Since he began the strike, Oleg Sentsov has been transferred to a separate cell where his health is regularly being monitored by prison medical staff. According to the lawyer, Oleg Sentsov’s health is stable and he has no complaints at this point about the penal colony staff’s treatment towards him, or the prison conditions. On 31 May, 16 days into the hunger strike, Russian politician, Ksenia Sobchak had a video-call with Oleg Sentsov during which she tried to convince him to end his hunger strike; he refused. Ksenia Sobchak described the film director as looking ‘very bad; he [has] lost weight; his cheeks are funnelled; he looks pale, but is very confident in his decision.’ On 4 June, Oleg Sentsov’s lawyer reported that Oleg Sentsov has lost 8 kilograms since he went on hunger strike and that prison doctors have warned him that if he continues the strike he would be at grave risk of kidney failure and in that event subject to force feeding.

The film director was sentenced on 25 August 2015 to 20 years imprisonment for allegedly setting up a branch of a ‘terrorist group’ and organizing ‘terrorist acts’ in April 2014. He maintains his innocence. He was convicted in a military court in the Russian Federation, following a grossly unfair trial, on politically-motivated charges and his conviction was based on “confessions” obtained under torture. Amnesty International is calling for his immediate release.

1) Take Action

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

- To immediately release Oleg Sentsov;
- To ensure that any and all medical treatment provided to Oleg Sentsov is done in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy and informed consent, and that no unwanted treatment or force feeding is executed which may amount to torture and other ill-treatment;
- To fully respect and protect the right to freedom of expression.

Contact these two officials by 29 August, 2018:

President of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin
Ul. Ilyinka, 23
103132 Moscow,
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 9102134
Twitter: @KremlinRussia
Salutation: Dear President

Ambassador Anatoly Antonov,

Embassy of the Russian Federation
2650 Wisconsin Ave. NW,
Washington DC 20007
Phone: 1 202 298 5700 | Fax: 1 202 298 5735
Email: rusembusa@mid.ru
Twitter: @mfa_russia
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 170.15*

Here’s why it is so important to report your actions: we record the actions taken on each case—letters, emails, calls and tweets—and use that information in our advocacy.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Oleg Sentsov's co-defendant, Aleksandr Kolchenko was also sentenced on 25 August 2015 by a military court in Russia, following a grossly unfair trial, to 10 years in prison for "committing terrorist acts". On 31 May, he went on hunger strike demanding the release of fellow activist, Oleg Sentsov. Amnesty International continues to call on the authorities to take immediate steps to review Aleksandr Kolchenko's case, overturn his convictions under false or disproportionate terrorism-related charges and – based on the review – either ensure he is released or that he receives a fair trial before a civilian court, under appropriate charges.

Amnesty International has on numerous occasions raised concerns about the violation of the right to a fair trial in Russia. Torture and other ill-treatment are endemic in the Russian criminal justice system. Independent trial monitors report systematic violations of the right to a fair trial at criminal and administrative hearings. Our long-standing concerns are epitomized in the case of Aleksandr Eivazov, former Secretary of the October District Court in St Petersburg and also a whistle-blower; he was arrested on 22 August 2017, for purportedly "interfering in the work of the court", on account of his refusal to sign and backdate records of a court hearing that someone else compiled. He had been a witness to numerous violations of court procedures, judicial ethics and workers' rights in the court, and had sent complaints about all violations to the authorities and shared this information on social media. Aleksandr Eivazov's complaints are not known to have been addressed. He remains in detention, despite his deteriorating health, and is a prisoner of conscience. For more information see [FU UA 228/17](#).

Name: Oleg Sentsov

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 170/15 Index: EUR 46/8528/2018 Issue Date: 6 June 2018