

URGENT ACTION

BELARUS EXECUTES SECOND PRISONER THIS YEAR
Mogilev Regional Court has confirmed that another death-row prisoner has been executed in Belarus. At least two men remain on death row at imminent risk of execution.

The execution of **Rygor Yuzepchuk** only became public knowledge on 8 May, but may have actually occurred in April. The date of his execution and the location of his grave have not been disclosed, in keeping with Belarusian law and practice.

Rygor Yuzepchuk was sentenced to death on 25 April 2013 for the murder of his cell mate in a prison in Mogilev, western Belarus, in June 2012. The sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court in July 2013. Rygor Yuzepchuk was already serving a 25-year sentence for a double murder.

At least two other men remain on death row in Belarus and there are concerns that both are at imminent risk of execution. **Eduard Lykau** was sentenced to death on 26 November 2013 for five murders committed in 2002, 2004 and 2011. His appeal was turned down by the Supreme Court on 15 April 2014. **Alyksandr Harynou** was sentenced to death by the Homel Regional Court on 14 June 2013 for the murder of a student in 2012. On 22 October 2013 the Supreme Court overturned Alyksandr Harynou's death sentence and returned the case for re-trial, but on 24 December 2013 the Homel Regional court again sentenced him to death. During the appeal, his lawyer had argued there had been a number of fair trial violations and that there was contradictory information about his mental health.

Alyksandr Harynou has appealed to President Lukashenka for clemency and his case is pending with the UN Human Rights Committee. It is not known if Eduard Lykau has personally appealed for clemency, but his case will automatically be considered for clemency by the relevant authority. If their appeals for clemency are rejected, they could be executed at any moment. In Belarus, prisoners are usually executed immediately after being told their appeal for clemency has been rejected. Neither their families or legal representatives are informed of the date of execution beforehand, nor are they granted a final meeting with the prisoner.

Please write immediately in Belarusian, Russian or your own language, calling on the authorities to:

- Immediately commute the death sentences of Alyksandr Harynou and Eduard Lykau to terms of imprisonment;
- Immediately establish an official moratorium on all death sentences and executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty in Belarus;
- End the secrecy on the use of the death penalty in Belarus, and return the body of an executed person to the family for burial or inform them where the body is buried and allow them access to that location.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 JUNE 2014 TO:

President

Alyksandr Lukashenka

Ul. 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

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

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

BELARUS EXECUTES SECOND PRISONER THIS YEAR

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

News of the execution of Rygor Yuzepchuk follows that of Pavel Selyun on 17 April 2014. He was executed in secret and with total disregard for the rights of his family. Pavel Selyun had appealed to President Lukashenka for clemency. His mother had also appealed to President Lukashenka, as well as to the Head of the Belarusian Orthodox Church, in an attempt to save his life, requesting that his death sentence be changed to life imprisonment.

Pavel Selyun's mother was not informed that clemency had been denied to her son, nor that he was due to be executed, in violation of international standards. She was not given any opportunity to have a final meeting with her son and had actually been planning to visit him in the near future. She only found out about his death from her lawyer after the latter went to meet him in prison, but was told instead "he has departed, in accordance with his sentence." It was only on 14 May that Pavel Selyun's mother received his death certificate. Beside 'Cause of death' are the words "Information not provided."

Furthermore, Pavel Selyun's case was pending with the UN Human Rights Committee, the body overseeing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Belarus is a state party. The Committee had requested that the sentence not be carried out until it had considered the case, but, as in previous instances, the Belarusian authorities carried out the execution regardless.

Following a year in which no executions took place, Belarus has executed at least two people so far in 2014. Belarus remains the last executioner in the whole of Europe and Central Asia, ignoring not only its legal human rights obligations but also the clear regional and global trend towards abolition of the death penalty.

No executions were carried out in Belarus in 2013, for the first time since 2009. There were two executions in both 2010 and 2011 and at least three in 2012. However, at least four death sentences were imposed in 2013, including that of Rygor Yuzepchuk and Pavel Selyun. The remaining two sentences were imposed on Alyaksandr Harynou and Eduard Lykau, considered to be under imminent risk of execution.

In Belarus, death sentences are implemented in strict secrecy and without giving adequate notice to the prisoners, their families or their legal representatives. Condemned prisoners are given no warning that they are about to be executed; instead they are taken out of their cells, told that their appeal for clemency has been turned down, and then forced to their knees and shot in the back of the head. The Criminal Executive Code allows the authorities to refuse to return the bodies of those executed to their families or to even inform them of the location of the burial site. In October 2013, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus stated: "The way the death penalty is carried out in Belarus amounts to inhuman treatment." (Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, UN document A/HRC/23/52, 18 April 2013, paragraph 45.)

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception. It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Name: Rygor Yuzepchuk, Alyaksandr Harynou and Eduard Lykau
Gender m/f: male

UA: 125/14 Index: 49/005/2014 Issue Date: 14 May 2014