

URGENT ACTION

STOP EXECUTION IN BELARUS

The Supreme Court of Belarus has rejected Vasily Yuzepchuk's appeal against the death penalty. He now has until 12 October to apply for clemency from President Lukashenka.

Vasily Yuzepchuk was sentenced to death by Brest Regional Court on 29 June 2009. He was convicted of murdering six elderly women. On 2 October his appeal against the death sentence was turned down by the Supreme Court. In Belarus, people who have been sentenced to death have 10 days in which to apply for clemency after their appeals are rejected. Only one request for clemency has been granted since President Lukashenka came to power in 1994.

Vasily Yuzepchuk, belongs to a marginalized group; he is a Roma who does not have an internal passport which is a requirement of all citizens in Belarus. He may have an intellectual disability and his lawyer has stated that he is illiterate and unable to tell the months of the year. Vasily Yuzepchuk has alleged that he was beaten while in pre-trial detention on two separate occasions in January and in March.

In Belarus, condemned prisoners are given no warning that they are about to be executed, and they are usually executed within minutes of being told that their appeal for clemency has been rejected. They are first taken to a room where, in the presence of the Director of the detention facility, the Prosecutor and one other Ministry of Interior employee, they are told that their appeal for clemency has been turned down and that the sentence will be carried out. They are then taken to a neighbouring room where they are forced to their knees and shot in the back of the head. Their families will only be informed days or sometimes weeks after the execution that their relative has been executed.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Russian or your own language:

- Urging President Lukashenka to grant clemency to Vasily Yuzepchuk;
- Calling on him to establish an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty, in line with UN General Assembly resolution 63/168, adopted on 18 December 2008.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 OCTOBER 2009 TO:

President

Alyaksandr Lukashenka
Administratsia Prezidenta Respubliki
Belarus
ul. Karla Marksa, 38
220016 Minsk
BELARUS
Fax: +375 17 226 06 10
+375 17 222 38 72

Email: contact@president.gov.by

Salutation: Dear President Lukashenka

Send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA: 218/09 (EUR 49/008/2009) 17 August 2009. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR49/008/2009.

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Further information on UA: 218/09 Index: EUR 49/011/2009 Issue Date: 07 October 2009

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