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Film by Sebastian Heinzl, Music by K-Os, "Jealous Guy" - buy it now

Free Zmitser Dashkevich!

10,000 crane birds for freedom of expression in Belarus

A legend says that if you fold 1,000 origami crane birds, your wish will be granted. Origami cranes have come to symbolise peace after the Second World War. Our wish today is for Belarus to restore freedom of expression and proceed with the immediate and unconditional release of all those who are detained for the legitimate and peaceful expression of their views.

We are appealing in particular for the release of youth opposition leader Zmitser Dashkevich. Zmitser was sentenced in November 2006 to one and a half years' imprisonment for 'organizing or participating in an activity of an unregistered non-governmental organization', under article 193, Part 1 of the Criminal Code. The Article was added to the Criminal Code in December 2005 as part of a series of amendments that introduced penalties for civil society organizations and other outspoken critics of the government, in the lead-up to the presidential elections in March 2006.

Join Make Some Noise and add your crane to free Zmitser Dashkevich! For your readymade origami print-out and a 'how-to' video, click here. Take a picture of your best origami crane(s) and upload it in the form below. Make Some Noise will then put all pictures online and track the progress towards the 10,000 cranes appeal. Once your picture has been uploaded, put your crane(s) in an envelope addressed to:

Minister of Internal Affairs
Vladimir V. NAUMOV
ul.Gorodskoi Val 4
220615 Minsk, BELARUS

[form]

Enter your details - step 1 of 2

(Step 2 will be upload your picture)

By submitting your picture you agree to Make Some Noise and Amnesty International using all or part of it for online and offline promotional & campaigning purposes. You further agree that you will not submit material that is copyrighted, unless you are the owner of such rights or have permission from their rightful owner

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Key facts about Belarus:

Belarus has a population of 9,800,000 and gained its independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991.

President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has been in power since 1994 and was reelected in March 2006 with over 80% of the votes. The UN General Assembly subsequently adopted a resolution on human rights violations in Belarus, condemning the government's failure to hold a free and fair presidential election

Large numbers of peaceful demonstrators were detained and beaten by riot police and anti-terrorist forces during demonstrations following the elections.

There is international condemnation of the harassment of opposition activists, nongovernmental organizations, journalists covering opposition demonstrations, and concern about the criminal prosecution of opposition leaders.

For the past 2 years, many Belarusian rock musicians have been unofficially banned from radio and TV, their applications for concert licenses denied and interviews with the state press shelved. The unofficial 'blacklist' marks the beginning of a concerted government crackdown against musicians, political opponents and the independent press.

Learn More about Belarus

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Now it's your turn!

Download and print your origami crane template here. Right-click the link and choose "save link as". Once the image is saved on your computer, print it, and cut out the print along the red lines: you should have a perfect 17x17cm square.