

To: Health Professionals
From: Medical Office/Middle East Program
Date: 17 December 2003

MEDICAL ACTION

BELARUS

Renewed appeal for medical care and release of medical academic, Professor Yury Bandazhevsky

(See previous action EUR49/016/2002, 2 October 2002)

“I am enormously grateful I am not forgotten. My state of health is not the best, I am exhausted by depression and have nightmares even while I am awake. The drugs are useless and have a great number of side-effects, including allergies. I don't have any strength left”. Letter from Professor Bandazhevsky to his wife, Galina (also a doctor), 19 November 2003

AI is concerned that Professor Yury Bandazhevsky's physical and mental health is continuing to deteriorate and is renewing its appeal to the Belarus authorities to ensure that he receives adequate medical care. Professor Bandazhevsky's birthday is 9 January 2004, and in addition to writing to the authorities on his behalf, you may want to send him a birthday wish as well.

Background information

Professor Bandazhevsky, a medical academic specialising in nuclear medicine, was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment on 18 June 2001. He was charged and convicted of receiving bribes from students. Amnesty International believes that his conviction is related to scientific research into the Chernobyl nuclear reactor catastrophe of 1986 and his open criticism of the state authorities. The organization considers him to be a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Recent information

On 2 October 2003, Professor Bandazhevsky had his appendix removed after being on the point of collapse. Three days earlier during an examination, the prison doctor did not recognize the inflammation and thought Professor Bandazhevsky was exaggerating his condition. He was only moved to the prison hospital after his cell mate alerted guards that he was in great pain.

On 10 November, Professor Bandazhevsky's wife, Galina, encountered great difficulties when she attempted to deliver a parcel of fresh food and medication to her husband. (On previous occasions she had been allowed to do so). This time she was only able

to leave the parcel after speaking with the deputy director of the penitentiary and showing him the written approval she had been given by the authorities.

Recommendations

Please write letters in Russian or English to the authorities below, using professionally-headed paper if you use this in your profession:

- Introducing yourself in your professional capacity and/or as a member of Amnesty International;
- Expressing concern at the continuing mental and physical ill-health of Professor Yuri Bandazhevsky (detained at UZ 15/1);
- Urging the authorities to provide him with appropriate medical care in accordance with provisions contained in international standards;
- Reminding the authorities that Amnesty International considers Professor Yury Bandazhevsky to be a prisoner of conscience and urging them to immediately and unconditionally release him.

Addresses

President of the Republic of Belarus

Alyaksandr Hryhoravich LUKASHENKA
Respublika Belarus
220016 g. Minsk
ul. Karla Marksa, 38
Administratsia Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus
Prezidentu LUKASHENKA A.H.

Fax: +375 172 26 06 10

Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Justice of the Republic of Belarus

Viktor G. GOLOVANOV
Respublika Belarus
220084 g. Minsk
ul. Kollektornaya, 10
Ministerstvo yustitsii Respubliki Belarus
Ministru GOLOVANOVU V.G.

Fax: +375 172 20 96 84

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES

Please send copies of your letters with a covering letter to:

1 Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus

Sergei N. MARTYNOV
Respublika Belarus
220030 g. Minsk
Ul. Lenina, 19
Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Respubliki Belarus
Ministru MARTYNOVU S.N.

Fax: +375 172 27 45 21

Salutation: Dear Minister

2 The Head of labour colony UZ 15/1

I.I. BAHUR
Respublika Belarus
220600 Minsk
ul. Kalvariiskaya 36

Salutation: Dear Mr Bahur

3 Head of Medical Staff

M.A. TUSHINSKY
Respublika Belarus
220600 Minsk
Ul. Kalvariyskaya, 36
Director of the Republican Hospital of the Ministry of the Interior
Tushinskomu M.A.

Salutation: Dear Mr Tushinsky

4 To diplomatic representatives of Belarus accredited to your country.

Birthday wishes for Professor Bandazhevsky may be sent to address number 2 (replace the name of the director (I. I. Bahur) with that of Professor Yury Bandazhevsky and add: P.O. Box 35 - 21

If you receive no reply within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response, referring to your previous letter(s).

Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 30 January 2004, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team, medical@amnesty.org).

Monitoring of actions

If you have access to e-mail you can help our attempt to monitor letter writing actions. If you write one, two or more letters please send us an e-mail and let us know. Please write in the subject line of your e-mail the index number of the action and the number of letters your write e.g. EUR 49/016/2002 – 3

Please send your message to medical@amnesty.org

Thank you for any actions you are able to organise for Prof. Bandazhevsky