

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

BLR 008 / 1111 / OBS 128

Obstacle to freedom of movement /
Confiscation of material

Belarus

November 24, 2011

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your intervention in the following situation in **Belarus**.

Description of the situation :

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources of the arrest of Mr. **Andrei Paluda**, a human rights defender from Belarus, and the confiscation of his material.

According to the information received, on November 22, 2011, late at night, Mr. Andrei Paluda was arrested as he crossed the Lithuanian/Belarusian border with ten copies of the brochure "Results of Independent monitoring", which the HRC Viasna and the Belarusian Helsinki Committee had published with the support of FIDH after observing the 2010 presidential election. The reports were seized by the customs officials who sent them to expert examination, labelling them as "magazines of oppositional character". Mr. Paluda was subsequently released.

The Observatory denounces this confiscation as another violation of freedom of expression and a further threat in order to silence all independent voices in a context of violent repression in Belarus.

Actions requested:

The Observatory urges the authorities of Belarus to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Andrei Paluda as well as of all human rights defenders in Belarus
- ii. Put an end to any kind of harassment - including at the judicial level - against all human rights defenders in Belarus;
- iii. Comply with all the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1998, which provides in particular that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others":
 - "to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels" (Article 1);
 - "to form, join and participate in non-governmental organizations, associations or groups" and "to communicate with non-governmental or intergovernmental organizations" (Article 5(b) and (c));
 - "to offer and provide professionally qualified legal assistance or other relevant advice and assistance in defending human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Article 9.3(c));
 - "to solicit, receive and utilize resources for the express purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms through peaceful means" (Article 13).

iii. More generally, ensure in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Belarus.

Addresses:

- President Alexander Lukashenko, ul. Karla Marksa, 38, 220016 Minsk, Belarus, Fax: + 375 172 26 06 10 or + 375 172 22 38 72, Email: infogrp@president.gov.by
- Head of the Administration of the President of Belarus, Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Makei, Ul. K. Marksa 34, 220016 Minsk, Fax: + 375 17 226-06-10
- General Prosecutor, Grigory Alekseevich Vasilevich, Internatsionalnaya str. 22, 220050 Minsk, Belarus, Fax: + 375 17 226 42 52
- Minister of Justice of Belarus, Mr. Viktor Grigorevich Golovanov, Ul. Kollektornaya, 10, 220004 Minsk, Belarus, Email kanc@minjust.by
- President of the Supreme Court of Belarus, Mr. Valentin Olegovich Sukalo, Ul. Lenina, 28, 220030 Minsk, Belarus, Email: scjustrb@pmrb.gov.by
- Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations in Geneva, 15 avenue de la paix, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, Fax: +41 22 748 24 51. Email: mission.belarus@ties.itu.int
- Embassy of Belarus in Brussels, 192 avenue Molière, 1050 Ixelles, Belgium, Fax : + 32 2.340.02.87, Email : embbel@skynet.be

Please also write to the diplomatic mission or embassy of Belarus in your respective country.

Paris-Geneva, November 24, 2011

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

- E-mail: Appeals@fidh-omct.org
- Tel and fax FIDH + 33 (0) 1 43 55 25 18 / +33 1 43 55 18 80
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