



**ACAT SUISSE SCHWEIZ SVIZZERA**  
Pour un monde sans torture ni peine de mort  
Für eine Welt frei von Folter und Todesstrafe  
Per un mondo senza tortura né pena di morte

President  
Alyaksandr Lukashenka  
Vul. Karla Marksa 38  
220016 Minsk  
Belarus

Bern, 30 October 2018

Dear President Lukashenka,

As Secretary general of ACAT-Switzerland, the Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture and the Death Penalty, I am writing to you on behalf of

**Mr. Aliaksandr Zhylnikau and Mr. Viachaslau Sukharko**


End of May 2018, the Supreme Court of Belarus has upheld the death sentences handed down earlier by the Minsk City Court to Mr. Zhylnikau and Mr. Sukharko for the murder of three people. According to the defense, the investigation and the subsequent trials violated the two men's rights to life, to physical integrity, to a fair trial and not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR art. 6, 7, 14) and the UN Convention against Torture (CAT, art. 1, 2, 16). Moreover, in Belarus - the only country in Europe applying the death penalty - death convicts are warned of their execution only minutes before it takes place. Their relatives are often informed weeks later about it and are denied the right to know the place of burial. We don't underestimate the gravity of the crime allegedly committed by Mr. Zhylnikau and Mr. Sukharko. However, these practices, as well as the death penalty - which is proven to produce no deterrent effect - constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment violating the ICCPR and the CAT, both ratified by the Republic of Belarus. Moreover, in November 2012, the Human Rights Committee found that the application of the death penalty in Belarus violates the human rights of those condemned and their families.

**Together with the members of ACAT who signed the annexed petition addressed to you on behalf of Mr. Aliaksandr Zhylnikau and Mr. Viachaslau Sukharko, I urge you, dear President Lukashenka:**

- **to commute the death penalty handed down to Aliaksandr Zhylnikau and Viachaslau Sukharko;**
- **to accept the international community's calls for a moratorium on the death penalty in Belarus and to commute the death penalty of all others sentenced to death in Belarus.**

I thank you for the attention given to this urgent concern.

**ACAT-Switzerland**

  
Bettina Ryser Ndeye  
Secretary general

**Copy to: - Valeriy Mitskevitch**, Chairman of the Commission on Clemency for the President of Belarus,  
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- **Embassy of the Republic of Belarus**, Quartierweg 6, Mailbox 153, 3074 Muri bei Bern - CH

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