



To the attention of: **Maira Mora**
Ambassador,
Head of European Union Delegation to Belarus

Copy sent to: **Sanaka Samarasinha**
UN Resident Coordinator in Belarus;
Mr. Miklós Haraszti
UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus
Mr. Andrea Rigoni
PACE Rapporteur on the situation in Belarus;

Submitted by: Legal Transformation Center (Lawtrend)¹
Human Rights Center Viasna²

15 April 2015
Minsk, Belarus

Urgent Appeal
in connection with the increased pressure on the political prisoner Mikalay Statkevich

Your Excellence, Mrs Maira Mora.

We appeal to you to prevent further violations of rights of the political prisoner Mikalay Statkevich.

As far as we are informed for the time being, Mikalay Statkevich is awaiting a trial that will most probably end with his transfer from a correctional colony to a prison. This means significant deterioration of conditions for the political prisoner. Up until now, the date of the court hearing is unknown, and there are fears that the hearing will take place secretly.

Let us remind that the prisoner faced extreme pressure after he was transferred from prison No 4 to correctional colony No 17. In particular, since January 12, 2015 he has confronted with the following administrative measures:

1. He was banned to receive a regular food parcel, one out of three for the course of a year;
2. He was banned to have a short-term meeting with relatives, one out of three during a year;
3. He was placed to a punishment isolation cell for three days;
4. Since April 3, he has been placed into a cell-type premise for two months;
5. He was banned to have a long-term meeting with relatives, one out of two during a year.

We also know about other forms of pressure, not regulated by laws on execution of criminal penalties.

On April 8, 2015 the Legal Transformation Center and the Human Rights Center Viasna sent an appeal to the Department of Execution of Penalties of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Belarus and to the administration of correctional colony No 17 about the increased pressure on Mikalay Statkevich. We asked to stop the administrative pressure on Mikalay Statkevich, to repeal the unlawful penalties, to allow entry for a representative of the EU to find out what the incarceration conditions were and if the facts of pressure had really occurred.

¹ www.lawtrend.org

² www.spring96.org

We are convinced that the EU Representatives should take urgent actions to react to the present situation, which we also tried to convey to the EU Representatives in a letter dated April 8, 2015.

Mikalay Statkevich, a candidate for the president of the Republic of Belarus in 2010, was sentenced to six years in a high-security colony under charges of organizing mass disturbances on the day of the presidential elections, December 19, 2010. At the trial, Mikalay Statkevich pleaded non-guilty; the Amnesty International acknowledged him to be a prisoner of conscience.

We consider that the mentioned actions of the colony administration are purposeful pressure on the political prisoner Mikalay Statkevich. The actions of the colony administration, in our view, testify to the fact that there are systematic violations of rights of Mikalay Statkevich; they bear unlawful and politically motivated character and can be regarded as inhuman and degrading treatment.

We call on you:

1. To pay an urgent visit to the prisoner Mikalay Statkevich in order to evaluate the conditions of imprisonment and verify the facts of pressure mentioned above;
2. To ensure that an EU representative and an UN representative were allowed to be present at the impending court hearing against Mikalay Statkevich and to monitor the court proceedings personally.

Elena Tonkacheva
Chair of the Board
Legal Transformation Center

Aliaksandr Bialiatski
Chair of the Council
Human Rights Center Viasna