

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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RUSSIA: ALEKSEI GORINOV'S LIFE AT RISK

The health of Russian prisoner of conscience Aleksei Gorinov is deteriorating and his life may be at serious risk. The Russian authorities must urgently provide adequate and all necessary healthcare to him. Furthermore, Aleksei Gorinov must be immediately and unconditionally released and provided with an effective remedy for his unlawful detention. He has been imprisoned solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

HEALTH CONCERNS

On 5 December, Russian human rights defenders reported that Aleksei Gorinov, who had just been transferred to Penal Colony No. 2 in Pokrov (a town 100 km east of Moscow), is ill. He complained of respiratory problems, which may be exacerbated by tuberculosis that he has had in the past; a part of his lung had been removed several years ago. The lawyer who visited Aleksei Gorinov on 8 December described the prisoner's condition as "very bad" and noted that his skin was pale blue, he was exhausted and barely able to sit on the chair.¹ Aleksei Gorinov is 62 years old.

Prison authorities had reportedly confiscated the medicine that Aleksei Gorinov had with him and instead only offered him paracetamol. Moreover, they refused to hospitalize him and forced him to clear snow outside. On 9 December, more than 240 health professionals sent an open letter to President Vladimir Putin raising concern over Aleksei Gorinov's health and calling for him to be provided with the necessary healthcare.²

RUSSIA'S INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

According to international and national law, Russian authorities are responsible for health and well-being of prisoners and have an obligation to provide them with adequate healthcare. As a state party of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Russia recognizes the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.³ Under UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), provision of health care for prisoners is a state responsibility. Prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community and should have access to necessary healthcare services free of charge without discrimination on the grounds of their legal status.⁴ Russian legislation likewise guarantees prisoners the right to healthcare and protection.⁵

WHO IS ALEKSEI GORINOV

Aleksei Gorinov was an opposition municipal deputy (councilor) in Krasnoselsky District of Moscow. On 15 March 2022, he spoke at the municipal council's session calling for an end to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and stating that children were dying in the conflict every day.⁶ He was arrested on 26 April 2022 and charged with "disseminating knowingly false information about Russian Armed Forces," a newly instituted criminal offence.⁷ On 8 July, he became the first person to be given a custodial sentence under these charges when a court in Moscow sentenced him to seven years'

¹ "Свободу Алексею Горинову!", Telegram channel, 8 December 2023, t.me/alexei_gorinov_2022/637

² "Письмо Горинов", 9 December 2023, t.ly/KE8eh

³ ICESCR, Article 12(1).

⁴ Nelson Mandela Rules, Rule 24(1).

⁵ Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 41(1); Federal Law on the Basics of Protecting the Health of Citizens in the Russian Federation, Article 26(1); Penal Code, Article 12(6).

⁶ Amnesty International, "Russia: Authorities deploy new criminal laws to silence criticism of Russia's war in Ukraine", 2 September 2022, [amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5988/2022/en](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5988/2022/en)

⁷ Criminal Code, Article 207.3(2).

imprisonment.⁸ While in detention, he has been repeatedly placed in SHIZO (penal cell) for alleged minor violations of prison rules.

On 13 September 2023, Russian authorities opened a new investigation against Aleksei Gorinov accusing him of “justification of terrorism”⁹ for discussing an alleged Ukrainian attack on a bridge in Crimea and Azov Regiment of the Ukrainian Armed Forces (it has been designated in Russia a “terrorist organization”).

RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES MUST:

Urgently provide Aleksei Gorinov with adequate and all necessary healthcare he requires;

Conduct an effective investigation into acts and omissions of relevant officials suspected to be responsible for the non-provision of healthcare to Aleksei Gorinov and, where appropriate, bring them to account in fair proceedings that meet international standards;

Release Aleksei Gorinov immediately and unconditionally, as he has been imprisoned solely for the exercise of his right to freedom of expression, and ensure that he has access to an effective remedy for his unlawful detention.

⁸ Amnesty International, “Russia: Municipal councillor sentenced to seven years in jail for opposing the Ukraine war”, 8 July 2022, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/russia-municipal-councillor-sentenced-to-seven-years-in-jail-for-opposing-the-ukraine-war](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/russia-municipal-councillor-sentenced-to-seven-years-in-jail-for-opposing-the-ukraine-war)

⁹ Criminal Code, Article 205.2(1).