

URGENT ACTION

SECOND KNOWN DEATH SENTENCE IN BELARUS IN 2015 A 28-year-old man, Ivan Kulesh, was sentenced to death in Belarus on 20 November. He is at least the second person to receive the death sentence in 2015.

On 20 November the Hrodna Regional Court, in western Belarus, sentenced **Ivan Kulesh** to death for “committing murder with particular cruelty”, theft and robbery under articles 139, 205, 207 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus. Ivan Kulesh was found guilty of murdering three female sales assistants, two in September 2013 and one in November 2014, and of stealing goods and money from the shops where these women worked. He was also found guilty of the attempted murder of the son of a saleswoman, who caught him in the shop in November 2014. Ivan Kulesh had been under the influence of alcohol when committing these crimes. According to the forensic medical examination Ivan Kulesh was diagnosed with an antisocial personality disorder, but was found “sane” (“*vmenyaemyi*”). Ivan Kulesh was raised in an orphanage and has a two-year old daughter.

Ivan Kulesh was detained in November 2014 and has been held in the Hrodna regional pre-trial detention facility. He will now be transferred to a pre-trial detention facility in Minsk, where executions take place. He has until 30 November to appeal the decision.

His lawyer asked the court to sentence Ivan Kulesh to 25 years' imprisonment, taking into account that Ivan Kulesh signed a confession and cooperated with the investigation. Ivan Kulesh previously was convicted for theft, robbery and providing misleading information to the investigation.

Belarus is the last country in Europe and Central Asia still applying the death penalty.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception. It violates the right to life, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Please write immediately in Belarusian, Russian, English or your own language:

- Urging President Lukashenka to halt any planned executions and immediately commute the death sentence handed down to Ivan Kulesh and all others sentenced to death in Belarus;
- Calling on him to establish an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to abolishing it;
- Stress that whilst we are not seeking to downplay the seriousness of the crime of which Ivan Kulesh has been convicted, research shows that death penalty does not deter crime whilst it is also the ultimate denial of human rights.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 JANUARY 2016 TO:

President

Alyaksandr Lukashenka
Vul. Karla Marksa 38
220016
Minsk, Belarus
Fax: +375 17 226 06 10
+375 17 222 38 72

Email: contact@president.gov.by

Salutation: **Dear President Lukashenka**

And copies to:

Prosecutor General Alyaksandr Kaniuk
Vul. Internatsionalnaya 22
220050 Minsk, Belarus
Fax: +375 17 226 42 52 (Say "fax" clearly if voice answers)
Email: info@prokuratura.gov.by

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 18 March 2015, Siarhei Ivanou was sentenced to death by the Homel Regional Court for the murder of a 19-year-old woman in August 2013.

Death sentences are often imposed in Belarus after unfair trials which include forced confessions; they are implemented in strict secrecy and without giving adequate notice to the condemned prisoners themselves, their families or legal representatives. The authorities refuse to return the bodies of those executed to their relatives or even tell them where they are buried. Executions are carried out despite requests from the UN Human Rights Committee to the government not to do so until the Committee has considered the cases. 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.

By failing to publish full information about the use of the death penalty, including comprehensive statistics about the number of death sentences imposed and executions carried out, the Belarusian authorities prevent informed public debate about the issue and hamper the movement towards abolition. The taking of a human life by the state is one of the cruellest acts a government can commit, and it is therefore extremely important that such a punishment should be subjected to public scrutiny and discussion.

Name: Ivan Kulesh
Gender m/f: M

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