

URGENT ACTION

BLOGGER STANDING TRIAL

Political activist and blogger Darya Poliudova is standing trial for the use of satire to criticize Russia's policy towards Ukraine online.

Darya Poliudova is a political activist and blogger from Poltavskaya Stanitsa, Krasnodar Region, in southern Russia. She is standing trial for her online activity which the authorities claim were "calls to commit extremist activities" and "calls to commit actions threatening the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation". The charges have been brought in connection to her posting photos on Russian social media VKontakte. The photos were of her carrying posters with slogans such as "No war in Ukraine but a revolution in Russia". The charges also relate to her taking part in online discussions about organizing a "march for federalisation of Kuban" (an historic name for a region in southern Russia cutting across a number of present-day regions, including parts of Krasnodar Region).

In August 2014, she was placed in pre-trial detention but released in February 2015 under travel restrictions pending trial. The court hearings in the case against her began in September 2015, at the Oktiabrskii District Court in Krasnodar. The prosecution has asked for a three year and six months' prison sentence for Darya Poliudova. The court decision in the case against her is expected on 21 December.

Darya Poliudova has been continuously persecuted for other peaceful public protests, which took place on the street and through social media. During 2015, she was sentenced four times to short periods of "administrative detention" of between four and 15 days. Due to the many detentions she lost her job as legal council at a hospital. Under international human rights law, no person should be imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

Please write immediately in Russian or your own language:

- Calling on the Russian authorities to immediately withdraw the charges pressed against Darya Poliudova in connection with her peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to respect and protect the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association without discrimination of any kind;
- Calling for an end of persecution of Darya Poliudova and others in Russia who peacefully exercise the right to freedom of expression or because of their political opinion or beliefs.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JANUARY 2015 TO:

Colonel General Igor Kolosov

Head of the Regional Federal Security
Service of the Russian Federation for
Krasnodar Region
Ul. Mira 46
350063, Krasnodar
Fax: +7 (861) 268 43 59
Email: krasnodar@fsb.ru
Salutation: Dear Colonel General

Prosecutor of Krasnodar Region

Leonid Gennadevich Korzhinek
Prokuratura of Krasnodar Region
Ul Sovetskaia 39
350063, Krasnodar
Fax: +7 (863) 287 70 01
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor

And copies to:

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation

Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a
125993 Moscow GSP- 3
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 987 5841 / +7 495 692 1725

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. This is the first update of UA 160/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR46/2120/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Darya Poliudova is well known locally for her street actions and online activism. She is a vocal critic of the Russian authorities, particularly for their policies towards Ukraine. She has been detained on numerous occasions for her peaceful street protests against the annexation of Crimea and Russia's involvement in the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine.

On 29 August 2014, she was arrested under Articles 280(2) and 280.1(2) of the Criminal Code ("public calls to commit extremist activities" and "calls to commit actions threatening the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation"). Both Articles carry a sentence of up to four years' imprisonment.

These charges relate to her social media posts in which she peacefully expressed her views, including photos of herself carrying political banners such as "No war with Ukraine but revolution in Russia". Under one photo of her protesting against the Russian government, she posted a message blaming President Vladimir Putin for "acts of terror and catastrophes in Russia". She called for "a socialist revolution" and wrote "On the Maydan [protests in Kyiv, Ukraine, in 2013-2014] people were able to remove [then Ukrainian President] Yanukovich, why are we not be able to remove Putin and then have a socialist revolution in Russia?"

In July 2014 she, together with some friends, discussed on the social media VKontakte plans to hold a "march for federalisation of Kuban". "Marches for federalisation" were a form of proposed local protest in several of Russia's regions in 2014. These protest were banned by the authorities. These "marches for federalisation" were using Russia's support for separatists in eastern Ukraine to call for greater autonomy for the respective regions within the Russian Federation.

In November, Darya Poliudova spent 15 days in detention for reposting several online publications, including satirical images that used swastikas.

There is a legal prohibition in Russia of the use of Nazi symbols in public, but the legislation does not distinguish between their propaganda and satirical use, which has led to several cases similar to those against Darya Poliudova.

Due to these detentions, she was unable to get a job in her field (law) and lost other petty jobs she held during the year. On 9 December, she was distributing leaflets on the street for a local business in Poltavskaya Stanitsa, the small town where she lives. She was stopped by police, who were making sure she was not distributing leaflets of political content. They did not arrest her, however later in the day she was sacked from her job following a call from the police to her employer.

According to Darya Poliudova, during the last few weeks she has been receiving numerous text messages containing threats on her mobile phone. The sender appears to know well both her and her family's movements. In one of the messages he warned Darya Poliudova not to continue her activities, or he would leave a grenade at her place so that she could try to blow up offices of the United Russia party (an apparent reference to a high-profile case of Ukrainian activists convicted in Russia for a purported arson attack against the party's offices in Crimea after its annexation by Russia, see <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/08/crimean-activists-hauled-before-a-russian-military-court/>). Darya Poliudova also complained of receiving such threats to the police, but so far authorities have failed to respond to her complaints.

Name: Darya Poliudova
Gender m/f: female