

URGENT ACTION

YOUNG MEN APPEALING DEPLORABLE SENTENCE

Yan Sidorov, Vladislav Mordasov and Viacheslav Shashmin were convicted on 4 October under fabricated “mass disturbances” charges. Viacheslav Shashmin received a three-year suspended sentence. Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were sentenced to over six years in prison and are appealing their sentence. They are prisoners of conscience and must be released immediately and unconditionally. The sentences of all three must be overturned, and allegations of torture and other ill-treatment effectively investigated.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
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Dear Prosecutor General,

*I am writing concerning the sentencing on 4 October of **Yan Sidorov** and **Vladislav Mordasov** to over six years in strict regime penal colony on fabricated charges of “attempted organization of mass disturbances” (Article 30(3), Article 212(1) of the Russian Criminal Code) and of **Viacheslav Shashmin** to a three-years suspended sentence on similarly unfounded charges of “attempted participation in mass disturbances” (Article 30 (3), Article 212 (2) of the Russian Criminal Code). Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov are prisoners of conscience, prosecuted solely for their attempt to exercise their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.*

Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were arrested on 5 November 2017 when they were preparing to hold a picket in front of the Rostov regional government building in support of dozens of Rostov citizens who had lost their houses in mass fires in July-August 2017. Viacheslav Shashmin was arrested outside a block of flats some distance away. He maintains that he did not take part in the picket. Both Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov have complained of torture and other ill-treatment by police to extract their “confessions”. Their allegations have been ignored, in violation of their rights and of fair trial principles.

I urge you as the Prosecutor General to:

- To take steps to have the conviction of Yan Sidorov, Vladislav Mordasov and Viacheslav Shashmin overturned and to ensure an immediate and unconditional release of Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov;**
- Ensure that Yan Sidorov's and Vladislav Mordasov's allegations of torture and other ill-treatment are promptly, effectively and impartially investigated, and anyone found responsible is brought to justice in fair trial proceedings.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 4 October, the Rostov-on-Don Regional Court found Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov guilty of “organizing” and Viacheslav Shashmin of participating in “mass disturbances” on 5 November 2017. The Court sentenced Yan Sidorov to six years and six months and Vladislav Mordasov to six years and seven months in a strict regime penal colony (a type of penal colony reserved for those convicted of most serious crimes). Viacheslav Shashmin was handed a three-year suspended sentence (non-custodial). Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov have appealed their convictions. Amnesty International believes the charges to be fabricated and the trial of the three men unfair.

In a series of mass fires in Rostov-on-Don in July and August 2017, more than 160 houses were destroyed, one person died, and dozens suffered injuries. Around 700 people were officially recognised as victims. While some compensation for the loss of property has been paid, the authorities did not allow people to build new houses on the same plots of land and did not pay compensation for the loss of their land, which in turn prompted rumours that the fire may have been started deliberately to evict the residents and clear the site for new developments.

On 5 November 2017, the then 18-year-old college student Yan Sidorov and 21-year-old Vladislav Mordasov came to the square in front of the Rostov-on-Don Region administration to hold a peaceful picket in support of the victims of Rostov fires. They had several printed leaflets, a loudspeaker and two rolled up handwritten posters that they had made the day before. The posters read: “Return the land to victims of Rostov fires” and “The government should resign”. Even before they could start the picket, police arrested them for holding an “unlawful gathering”. On the same day, police arrested 18-year-old Viacheslav Shashmin outside a block of flats close by. Viacheslav Shashmin claims that he did not know Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov at the time and did not participate in their picket.

On 6 November 2017, Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were sentenced in separate proceedings to seven days of “administrative detention” each under Article 20.2, part 2, of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences (“Organization or conduct of a public event without proper notification of the authorities of this event”). Viacheslav Shashmin was given five days of “administrative detention” on spurious charges of “petty hooliganism” under Article 20.1 of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences. While in police custody, Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were reportedly subjected to torture and other ill-treatment in an attempt to extract “confessions” that they were going to organize a violent demonstration. On 17 November 2017, Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were officially charged with the crimes of “attempting to organize mass disturbances” (Article 30, part 3, Article 212, part 1, of the Russian Criminal Code) and “attempting to participate in mass disturbances” (Article 30, part 3, Article 212, part 2, of the Russian Criminal Code). Viacheslav Shashmin was charged with “attempting to participate in mass disturbances”.

Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov have remained in custody since their arrest on 5 November 2017. The trial of the three young men started in Rostov-on-Don regional court on 29 May 2019 and lasted until 4 October 2019. During the trial, at least a third of the prosecution’s witnesses refused to confirm their earlier testimonies given during the pre-trial investigation and stated that they had given them under pressure from the investigators.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English and Russian.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 27 November 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Yan Sidorov (he/him), Vladislav Mordasov (he/him), Viacheslav Shashmin (he/him).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/0851/2019/en/>