

URGENT ACTION

IHAR BANTSAR RELEASED PENDING APPEAL

Punk musician, Ihar Bantsar, was sentenced on 19 March Vto one and a half years of restricted freedom in an open correctional facility. He was jailed on 20 October 2020 for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and went on hunger strike on 3 March to protest against his prolonged detention. Ihar Bantsar was released from court on 19 March, pending his appeal, and able to return home.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

Punk musician, **Ihar Bantsar**, declared a hunger strike on 3 March to protest against his prolonged detention on trumped-up criminal charges. He was detained in Hrodno, western Belarus, on 20 October 2020, after he danced in front of police cars wearing a thong during protests. His actions were entirely peaceful and constituted a legitimate exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Nonetheless, he was charged under Article 339.1 of the Criminal Code of Belarus (hooliganism) and placed in pre-trial detention.

During his hunger strike his health seriously deteriorated and he was initially denied the urgent medical attention he needed. Amnesty International urged the authorities to grant him access to medical care and stated that he had been imprisoned solely for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and called for him to be immediately and unconditionally released.

On 19 March, Ihar Bantsar was sentenced to one and a half years of restricted freedom in an open correctional facility, but he was released from court, pending his appeal, and able to return home. Amnesty International will continue monitoring the case.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ihar Bantsar (he/him)

THIS IS THE SECOND AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 35/21

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur49/3861/2021/en/>

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