

URGENT ACTION

THREE FACE JAIL FOR PEACEFUL PROTEST

The trial against Yan Sidorov, Vladislav Mordasov and Viacheslav Shashmin, three young men from Rostov-on-Don in south-west Russia, is expected to start in May. They are prosecuted for trying to organise a peaceful protest in November 2017 in support of dozens of Rostov residents who had lost their houses in mass fires. They could be sentenced to 15 years in jail if convicted. Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov have been in pre-trial detention and Viacheslav Shashmin under house arrest since November 2017. They are prisoners of conscience and must be released immediately and unconditionally.

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

Prosecutor of Rostov Region
Yurii Alekseevich Baranov
Prosecutor's Office of Rostov Region
344011, Rostov-on-Don,
Pereulok Khalturinskiy, 101
Email: mail_prok@donpac.ru

Dear Prosecutor,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding criminal prosecution of **Yan Sidorov** and **Vladislav Mordasov** on charges of attempted organization of civil unrest (Article 30(3), Article 212(1) of the Russian Criminal Code) and **Viacheslav Shashmin** on charges of attempted participation in civil unrest (Article 30 (3), Article 212 (2) of the Russian Criminal Code). Since November 2017 Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov have been remanded in detention and Viacheslav Shashmin held under house arrest. Both Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov have complained of torture and other ill-treatment by police to extract their "confessions". Their complaints have not been investigated.

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.

I therefore urge to:

- **Immediately and unconditionally release Yan Sidorov, Vladislav Mordasov and Viacheslav Shashmin, as they are prisoners of conscience, detained and prosecuted solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression;**
- **Ensure that Yan Sidorov's and Vladislav Mordasov's complaints of torture and other ill-treatment are promptly, effectively and impartially investigated, and all responsible are brought to justice in fair trial proceedings.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At around mid-day on 5 November 2017, the then eighteen-year-old college student Yan Sidorov and twenty-one-year-old Vladislav Mordasov came to the square in front of the Rostov Region administration to hold a peaceful picket. 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".

In a series of mass fires that spread through 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. In March 2019, more than 60 people signed an open letter in support of Yan Sidorov, Vladislav Mordasov and Viacheslav Shashmin.

According to Vladislav Mordasov's statement of 6 August 2018, even before the two young men could unfold their posters and start the picket, a group of eight police officers from the Centre for Combating Extremism (Centre "E") approached them and demanded the protesters show them the posters. Some of the police officers filmed them on mobile phones. The two young men showed their posters without objection. The police then arrested them for holding an "unlawful picket". On the same day, the police arrested the then eighteen-year-old Viacheslav Shashmin outside a block of flats close to the square where Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were arrested. Viacheslav Shashmin claims that he did not know Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov at the time and did not participate in their picket.

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 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 still serving their administrative detention, Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were reportedly further interrogated and tortured. On 17 November 2017 Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov were officially charged with the crimes of "attempting to organize civil unrest" (Article 30, part 3, Article 212, part 1 of the Russian Criminal Code) and "attempting to participate in civil unrest" (Article 30, part 3, Article 212, part 2 of the Russian Criminal Code). Viacheslav Shashmin was charged with "attempting to participate in civil unrest". The charges were slightly adjusted twice during the investigation. First, making their "crime" lighter, but on 19 March 2019 a new charge sheet was given to them which qualified their actions under the same Articles of the Criminal Code but as a more serious crime. If convicted, Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov could be sentenced to up to 15 years in jail and Viacheslav Shashmin – up to eight years in jail.

Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov remain in custody since their arrest on 5 November 2017. Viacheslav Shashmin has been under house arrest since having served "administrative detention" under "petty hooliganism" charges. Their detention is currently extended until 10 May 2019 after which their case could go to court.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Russian, English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 21 May 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) and Viacheslav Shashmin (he/him).

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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

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Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR ALEXANDER VLADIMIROVICH YAKOVENKO 6/7 Kensington Palace Gardens, London, W8 4QP 0207 229 6412 Fax 0207 727 8625 kanc@rusemb.org.uk www.rusemb.org.uk **Please check with your section before sending appeals after the above date.**