

URGENT ACTION

ARTIST SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS IN PRISON

On 16 November 2023 Aleksandra Skochilenko was sentenced to seven years in prison for “disseminating knowingly false information about the Russian Armed Forces”. In March 2022, Aleksandra Skochilenko had replaced price tags in a local supermarket with little notes containing information about Russia’s war against Ukraine. Aleksandra Skochilenko has already been in custody for over 19 months. She suffers from celiac disease and heart disease and her health has deteriorated greatly during this time. She is a prisoner of conscience and must be released immediately and unconditionally.

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

Krasnov Igor Viktorovich
Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
ul. Bolshaya Dmitrovka, 15a, str. 1,
GSP-3, Moscow, 125993
Russian Federation

Dear Prosecutor General,

I am writing to urge you to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of artist **Aleksandra Skochilenko**, who has been sentenced to seven years in prison, for “disseminating knowingly false information about Russian Armed Forces” (Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code). This is not an internationally recognised crime as it restricts the human right to freedom of expression in a manner that is contrary to Russia’s international human rights obligations and its own Constitution.

Aleksandra Skochilenko is a prisoner of conscience as she has been imprisoned solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression.

Aleksandra Skochilenko has serious health problems – she suffers from celiac disease and heart disease. According to her doctors, Aleksandra requires adequate medical supervision and a strict gluten-free diet, which is not available in the penitentiary system. She has already been in custody for more than a year and a half. Her health condition deteriorated greatly during this detention, and further incarceration will make it worse and may put her life in danger.

I urge you to ensure that Aleksandra Skochilenko is released immediately and unconditionally. Her verdict must be overturned. Meanwhile, taking into account her health conditions and doctors' recommendations I urge you to ensure that Aleksandra Skochilenko is held in conditions that meet international standards and is urgently provided the adequate medical care she requires.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Aleksandra "Sasha" Skochilenko, a songwriter and artist from St. Petersburg, replaced price tags in a local supermarket with little notes containing information about Russia's war against Ukraine, such as the bombing of an arts school in Mariupol used as a shelter by civilians, on 31 March 2022. On 11 April, officers of the Investigative Committee arrested her, and charged her with "disseminating knowingly false information about Russian Armed Forces" under the newly introduced Article 207.3(2) of the Criminal Code.

Aleksandra Skochilenko is suffering from celiac disease – genetic gluten intolerance. According to medical experts if she is consuming gluten, organ failure or oncological and autoimmune diseases may start to progress. She must constantly follow a strict gluten-free diet and the Federal Penitentiary Service has no provisions for special menus in prison for those who need gluten-free food. Aleksandra Skochilenko also suffers from a heart defect; according to her cardiologist, she needs regular medical supervision and even may need surgery in future.

On 16 November 2023 she was sentenced to seven years in prison. "I will stick to my opinion and my truth. And I don't believe that anyone should be legally compelled to adhere to one truth or another", she said in her concluding statement. Her defence is expected to file an appeal.

Aleksandra Skochilenko has already been in custody for more than a year and a half. While in detention her health condition has rapidly deteriorated. Long court hearings have been difficult for her: she often felt ill in court and on one occasion she fainted and needed medical assistance. The presiding judge repeatedly refused her breaks in day-long hearings when Aleksandra Skochilenko needed to have a drink and take her medication.

Aleksandra Skochilenko is a prisoner of conscience and must be immediately and unconditionally released.

Aleksandra Skochilenko featured in Amnesty International's 2022 global Write for Rights campaign.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Russian. You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [15 January 2024]
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Aleksandra Skochilenko (She/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/5889/2022/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGET

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