

Generalstaatswalt
Andrei Shved
Internatsiyanalnaya Str. 22
220030 Minsk
BELARUS

Dear Prosecutor General,

I am deeply concerned about the health and safety of the prisoner of conscience Maryia Kalesnikava and demand her immediate and unconditional release.

Following her abduction-style arrest on 7 Sept. 2020, on 6 Sept. 2021 Maryia Kalesnikava was sentenced to 11 years in prison on false charges of "extremism," "trying to seize power," and "calls for actions causing harm to the national security." She is serving her sentence in female penal colony N4 in Homiel, where her health has significantly deteriorated. She has been repeatedly targeted by the prison administration for alleged disciplinary infringements.

On the night of 28 November 2022, Maryia Kalesnikava was admitted to the intensive care unit of Homiel's emergency hospital where she underwent surgery for a perforated ulcer. The prison administration forced her to resume her work at the colony's clothing factory before she was able to properly recover after the surgery. Immediately prior to being admitted to the hospital, Maryia Kalesnikava had spent over 10 days in a freezing punishment isolation cell despite having serious health concerns. Her cell was so cold that she could not sleep at all, so she walked constantly to keep warm. Although Maryia Kalesnikava fainted repeatedly and suffered from high blood pressure and nausea while in solitary confinement, the authorities refused to transfer her to the hospital until her health significantly deteriorated. The penal colony's administration did not inform her lawyer or family that she had been hospitalized and undergone surgery, even though she had repeatedly asked the hospital staff to get in touch with her family. In May 2023, her health deteriorated further. Since mid-February, Maryia Kalesnikava has been denied any communication with her family (including calls, letters, or visits) while her lawyer has been unlawfully refused access to her since 7 February, despite repeated attempts to contact her. I urge you to:

- Ensure Maryia Kalesnikava's immediate and unconditional release;
- Urgently end the ill-treatment and incommunicado detention of Maryia Kalesnikava, provide her with adequate health care and all essentials including medicines;
- Promptly and effectively investigate the allegations of Maryia Kalesnikava's ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and unfounded prosecution, and bring all those responsible to account, in fair trial proceedings;
- End the misuse of the criminal justice system to target activists and peaceful dissent.

Yours sincerely,

Copy:

Botschaft der Republik Belarus
S. E. Herrn Denis Sidorenko
Am Treptower Park 32
12435 Berlin

Fax: 030-5363 5923
E-Mail: germany@mfa.gov.by