

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST IMPRISONED IN STRICT CONDITIONS

Natalya Filonova is an activist and journalist from Ulan-Ude, Russia's Eastern Siberia. In 2022, she was arrested at a peaceful protest against the conscription of men to fight in the Russian military in the war in Ukraine. She was subsequently sentenced to 2 years and 10 months in prison for allegedly scratching two police officers. In prison, she faced repeated sanctions, including placement in a punishment cell, and recently, the tightening of her detention conditions. Amnesty International believes that Natalya Filonova's conviction and sentence are unlawful and based on politically motivated charges because of her peaceful activism. Therefore, she should be released immediately.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 70.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

****Note: USPS has restriction postal mail to Russia**
Hanko Andrey Viktorovich
Prosecutor of the Prosecutor's Office for the Irkutsk region
Volodarskogo st., 5
Irkutsk
664011
Russian Federation
Email: procuror@38.mailop.ru

Russian Embassy in the United States
Ambassador Anatoly I. Antonov
2650 Wisconsin Avenue, NW,
Washington DC 20007
Email: rusembusa@mid.ru
Salutation: Dear Ambassador Anatoly I. Antonov

Dear Mr. Hanko, or Dear Ambassador Anatoly I. Antonov

I am deeply concerned by the news that **Natalya Filonova** has been arbitrarily placed in strict conditions of detention. Natalia is serving her sentence in the IK-11 penal colony in Irkutsk region. The decision to transfer her to strict conditions was made by the administration of this penal colony.

Natalya Filonova, a 62-year-old civic activist and journalist, was convicted of allegedly "using violence against representatives of the authorities". Her charges are politically motivated, and she is being prosecuted solely for peacefully expressing her opinion. Therefore, she should be immediately released.

I am calling on you to take all necessary steps to ensure the immediate release of Natalya Filonova. While she is still incarcerated, I urge you to ensure that she is not subjected to arbitrary punishment. The alleged ill-treatment of Natalya Filonova in the IK-11 penal colony must be promptly and effectively investigated, and those suspected of responsibility should face fair disciplinary, administrative, or criminal proceedings as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Natalya Filonova has been an activist since the 1990s, based in Ulan-Ude, Buryatia (a region in Russia's Eastern Siberia). In 2008, she became a member of the Solidarity movement, which called for democratic reforms. Natalya Filonova worked as a correspondent for the regional newspaper "Petrovsk-Zabaikalskie Ognii" ("Lights of PetrovskZabaikalsky"). Then she started publishing her own newspaper, "Vsemu naperekor" ("Despite everything").

Natalya Filonova took part in peaceful protests, including those in support of Aleksei Navalny, in memory of slain Solidarity leader Boris Nemtsov, and against Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

On September 24, 2022, Natalya Filonova was arbitrarily detained at a peaceful assembly against the forced conscription of men for the war in Ukraine (so-called "partial mobilization") held in Ulan-Ude, Buryatia's capital. The authorities arrested Natalya Filonova and initiated proceedings against her for alleged "repeated violation of the established procedure of holding public assemblies". However, on September 26, the court dismissed this case and released Natalya Filonova. Police immediately arrested her again and opened a criminal case against her under Article 318 of the Criminal Code: "Use of violence against a representative of the authorities". According to the investigators, she had attacked two police officers while she was being transferred. Filonova allegedly hit one police officer and poked another in the face with a pen while in a police car.

Charges of using force against police officers are widely used in Russia to prosecute activists participating in rallies. The protest that Natalya participated in was peaceful, as was all her previous activism and journalistic work. As an activist, she regularly faced pressure from the authorities, including multiple arrests for alleged violations of Russia's excessively restrictive legislation on public assemblies. Therefore, Amnesty International believes that Natalya's conviction and sentence are politically motivated with the aim of silencing her criticism of the authorities.

On October 22, 2022, Natalya Filonova was detained. Initially she was placed under house arrest, but on November 17, 2022, she was put in pre-trial detention for violating the conditions of her house arrest (she had to visit a nearby town, where her husband had been urgently hospitalized leaving their child alone).

On August 31, 2023, Oktyabrsky District Court of Ulan-Ude sentenced Natalya Filonova to two years and 10 months in prison.

In May 2024, Natalya Filonova said she had rejected an offer of a presidential pardon, because she said this would mean her admitting guilt. According to Natalya Filonova, after this she began to be subjected to additional punishments in prison, although she had previously been in good standing. She was labelled for "extremism", placed in a solitary punishment cell on three occasions, and in July, was transferred to detention under strict conditions.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Russian, English, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: October 20, 2024

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Natalya Filonova, she/her