



Urgent Action Office 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 urgentaction@amnesty.ca
First UA: 81 Index: EUR 46/7126/2023 Russian Federation of August 22, 2023

RUSSIAN FEDERATION RELEASE WOMEN DIRECTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT

Theatre director, Evgenia Berkovich and playwright Svetlana Petriyчук are being arbitrarily detained since May 5, and face prosecution for authoring and staging “Finist Yasny Sokol,” an award-winning play about women who left for Syria and married members of armed groups. Both women face absurd charges of “justifying terrorism” which carry up to seven years in prison. Russian authorities must immediately release them and drop all charges.

Write to the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation urging him to:

- Immediately drop all charges against Evgenia Berkovich and Svetlana Petriyчук and ensure their immediate release.

Write to:

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

Complaint form (only in Russian):

<https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/web/gprf/internet-reception/personal-receptionrequest>

And copy:

His Excellency Oleg STEPANOV
Ambassador
Embassy of the Russian Federation
285 Charlotte Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 8L5
Tel: (613) 235-4341/236-1413 (24H) Fax: (613) 236-6342
Email: info@rusembassy.ca

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Evgenia Berkovich is a Russian theatre director, screenwriter, poet feminist and social activist. Svetlana Petriyчук is a Russian playwright, teacher, theatre and film director.

Since May 5, 2023, they have been in pre-trial detention accused of “justifying terrorism”, and face prosecution and up to seven years in prison. The charges against them stem from the documentary play “Finist Yasny Sokol” which they staged in 2020. The play’s name refers to a character from the Russian folklore.

The play is based on material from real criminal cases against women from Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, who decided to leave for Syria and marry members of armed groups and were subsequently convicted of "aiding terrorism". These materials include transcripts of interrogations and sentences.

In 2021-2022, "Finist Yasny Sokol" received prestigious Russian theatrical awards, including the Golden Mask Award for Best Playwright, and was widely acclaimed by critics. Before the criminal prosecution, the accusation of "justifying terrorism" was never heard against this play. On the contrary, critics and spectators noted its humanistic message.

On May 4, 2023, a criminal case was opened against them both for "justifying terrorism". The charges are based on an "expert analysis" which concluded that the play "contains signs of the ideology of Islamism and jihadism, as well as radical feminism and the fight against the androcentric social structure of Russia." Evgenia Berkovich and Svetlana Petriyuchuk are being targeted simply for exercising the right to freedom of expression and they must be immediately released and the charges against them dropped.