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Fourth UA: 36/22 Index: EUR 46/7449/2023 Russia of November 22, 2023

RUSSIAN FEDERATION ARTIST SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS IN PRISON

On November 16, 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.

Write to Russian Ambassador to Canada urging him to convey to the Prosecutor General in Russia the need to:

- Ensure that Aleksandra Skochilenko is released immediately and unconditionally, and her verdict overturned.
- Meanwhile, taking into account her health conditions and doctors' recommendations, ensure that Aleksandra Skochilenko is held in conditions that meet international standards and is urgently provided with the adequate medical care she requires.

Write to:

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

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 March 31, 2022 bombing of an arts school in Mariupol used as a shelter by civilians. On April 11, 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 November 16, 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 defense 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 were difficult for her: she often felt ill in court. 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.