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23 September 2022

Belarus: Human rights defender Uladzimir Tselyapun sentenced to 10 days of administrative arrest

On 6 September 2022, the Mozyr District Court sentenced human rights defender **Uladzimir Tselyapun** to 10 days of administrative detention for “circulating extremist information on Facebook” under Article 19.11 of the Code of Administrative Offences. The human rights defender, who was arrested on these charges on 3 September 2022, has not received any access to legal support. He was represented in court by his son, who is a lawyer.

[Uladzimir Tselyapun](#) is a Belarusian human rights defender working in Mozyr on the intersection of environmental rights and access to information issues, focusing particularly on the access to information related to the Chernobyl disaster. Uladzimir Tselyapun’s work also focused on advocating for free and fair elections and local community gatherings.

On 6 September 2022, the Mozyr District Court sentenced the human rights defender Uladzimir Tselyapun to 10 days of administrative detention for “circulating extremist information on Facebook” under Article 19.11 of the Code of Administrative Offences. The information on which the prosecution is based refers to a link posted by the human rights defender on Facebook on 18 October 2021. It is a link leading to “[Polelsye](#)”, a Belarusian online media outlet that the government outlawed and labelled as extremist. The human rights defender has not had access to legal support since his arrest on 3 September 2022, despite his repeated requests. He ended up being represented in court by his son, who arrived to the hearing earlier despite being misinformed about the time by the court’s clerk. During the court hearing, the human rights defender felt unwell and needed a doctor’s assistance. The Human Rights Center “Viasna” reported that the police refused to accept warm clothes and medications from Uladzimir Tselyapun’s relatives for the defender.

Front Line Defenders expresses grave concern about the arrest and sentencing of human rights defender Uladzimir Tselyapun and his lack of access to medical and legal support, as it believes that the defender is being targeted solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights.

Front Line Defenders calls upon Belarus authorities to:

1. Immediately drop all charges and release human rights defender Uladzimir Tselyapun and ensure that he has necessary access to medical and legal support;
2. Cease using extremism laws to suppress human rights defenders, journalists, and lawyers;
3. Cease the nationwide crackdown against human rights defenders for their peaceful and legitimate human rights work;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Belarus can carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.