

UA36/22, **Update 1**, AI Index EUR 46/5692/2022 of 9 June 2022
The original UA index number is EUR 46/5525/2022 of 27 April 2022

RUSSIAN FEDERATION ARTIST'S DETENTION PROLONGED

On 30 May a court extended the pretrial detention of artist Aleksandra Skochilenko until 1 July. Aleksandra Skochilenko was arrested on 11 April accused of replacing price tags with anti-war information in a supermarket in Saint Petersburg. She is charged with “disseminating knowingly false information about the use of the Russian Armed Forces” (Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code). Aleksandra Skochilenko has a serious health condition and placing her in pre-trial detention where she is not getting the full appropriate diet and medical care puts her health and wellbeing at risk. She faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Aleksandra Skochilenko is a songwriter and artist from Saint Petersburg. She is internationally famous for her work on destigmatizing mental illnesses that have helped many people inside and outside Russia. Aleksandra Skochilenko suffers from celiac disease (genetic gluten intolerance). If she consumes gluten, organ failure or oncological and autoimmune diseases may start to develop. According to her lawyer and media reports, the pre-trial detention centre can't fully ensure the gluten-free diet and doesn't lift the restrictions for food delivered by her family. This neglect of her health puts her in serious danger.

Write to the Prosecutor of Saint Petersburg urging him to:

- immediately drop the criminal case against Aleksandra Skochilenko and release her
- pending that, ensure that Aleksandra Skochilenko is held in conditions meeting international standards and provided with the adequate medical treatment she may require at the same standards of health care that are available in the community, including by urgently guaranteeing she can access an appropriate diet

Write to:

Melnik Viktor Dmitrievich
Prosecutor of Saint Petersburg
2/9 Pochtamtskaya street
Saint Petersburg 190000
Russian Federation
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor:

And copy:

His Excellency Oleg Stepanov
Ambassador
Embassy of the Russian Federation
285 Charlotte Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 8L5
Fax: 613 236 6342
Email: info@rusembassy.ca

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Aleksandra Skochilenko is a songwriter and artist from St. Petersburg. She is accused of replacing price tags in local supermarkets with anti-war information, including about those killed during the shelling of the Mariupol Drama Theatre. On 11 April, police searched Aleksandra Skochilenko's home, arrested and interrogated her until 3am the next morning. On 13 April, the Vasileostrovsky District Court placed her in pre-trial detention until 1 June 2022 (the term is likely to be extended). Aleksandra Skochilenko is accused of "public dissemination of deliberately false information about the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, the exercise by state bodies of the Russian Federation of their powers" under recently added Article 207.3 (2) of the Criminal Code. She faces 5 to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Aleksandra Skochilenko is well-known in the art community: she writes songs, creates comic books and cartoons, organizes concerts and jam sessions. She also wrote the famous "Book About Depression" which helped many people and contributed to destigmatizing mental illnesses. The book has become extremely popular. It has been reprinted several times and translated into various languages. It also has inspired many videos and exhibitions.

Aleksandra Skochilenko suffers from celiac disease and requires a special gluten-free diet. On 20 April it was reported that her health had deteriorated due to lack of access to adequate food. On 21 April her lawyer informed Amnesty International that the detention centre finally allowed a food parcel from her family more suitable for her. On 23 April she was transferred from a temporary detention centre to a pre-trial detention centre. On 25 April one of Aleksandra Skochilenko's lawyers visited her in the pre-trial detention centre and reported that her health condition was getting worse, as she was not being able to eat as she is not provided with the diet she requires, and she has not been allowed food provided by her family either. She feels weak much of the time. She is also being subjected to psychological pressure from detention centre guards and her cellmates, with unsanitary conditions in her cold cell. On 7 May, after the above information was shared with the media, Aleksandra's conditions in detention were improved. She is provided with gluten-free food at least once a day. However, she is unable to have either breakfast or dinner. On the day of her last trial, she was unable to eat anything all day. Aleksandra lost a lot of weight while in detention which creates risks for a person with her disease. In addition to that, the investigation made her partner a witness in her criminal trial. That means that they cannot see each other. Her partner made a few claims, but the investigator declined all of them.