URGENT ACTION

JAILED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER'S DIRE HEALTH

Nasta Loika, a Belarusian woman human rights defender, prisoner of conscience and educator, must be unconditionally released. She is serving a seven-year prison sentence imposed under trumped up charges of "inciting racial, national, religious or other social enmity or discord" in retaliation for her human rights work. She has reportedly suffered torture and other ill-treatment in detention. She is not receiving food of adequate nutrition which has detrimental effect on her health. She was subjected to prolonged solitary confinement for six months which amounts to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Dmitry Hara
Prosecutor General of the Republic of Belarus
Internatsiyanalnaya Str., 22
Minsk 220030
Republic of Belarus
Email: info@prokuratura.gov.by

Dear Prosecutor General,

I am extremely concerned about the ongoing arbitrary detention of prisoner of conscience, human rights defender and educator Nasta (Anastasia) Loika, in Homel prison colony. Her seven-year imprisonment is in retaliation for her human rights work and criticism of the Belarus authorities.

She has been held in conditions amounting to ill-treatment, including being subjected to prolonged solitary confinement for six months, in a four-square-meters punishment cell with prohibition of receiving parcels which were crucial for her proper nutrition and health and of calls and visits. Currently, she is only allowed letters and one call per month from her 78 years-old mother. In two years and four months of her imprisonment, she had only one visit allowed from her mother. She was arbitrarily listed as "a terrorist" which prevents her from receiving financial support in prison and thus cannot afford to eat properly. Nasta is a vegan and has to buy vegan food from the prison shop to eat properly, but has no funds to do so. This has a detrimental effect on her physical and mental health.

I urge you to:

- ***Ensure Nasta Loika's immediate and unconditional release and stop misusing the criminal justice system to target her and other human rights defenders in Belarus.***

- ***Ensure prompt, independent and effective investigation of the allegations of Nasta Loika's torture and other ill-treatment, and of her arbitrary detention and prosecution, and hold those suspected to be responsible to account through fair proceedings.***

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nasta Loika was arbitrarily detained on 6 September 2022 as she was leaving the Minsk City Court after attending a court hearing in the trial against fellow human rights defenders Marfa Rabkova, Andrei Chapyuk and their eight co-defendants. On 7 September 2022, Nasta Loika was given 15 days detention, purportedly for “petty hooliganism”, a violation under Article 19.1 of the Code of Administrative Offences. On 22 September 2022, the Frunzenski District Court of Minsk ordered her further 15-day detention under the same Article. During her detention Nasta Loika was denied access to her lawyer and denied necessary medical treatment and basic necessities, including warm clothes and drinking water. She was released on 6 October 2022, after serving her detention.

On 28 October 2022, Nasta Loika was again arbitrarily detained in Minsk and on 31 October 2022 given a further 15-day detention under the same accusations. After serving her 15-day detention, Nasta Loika was not released on 12 November 2022 and same allegations were again brought against her. During the online hearing, Nasta Loika reported that she had been tortured with electric shock during questioning and that she had been left for eight hours in the courtyard under the elements without proper clothing. She fell ill as a result. The prison authorities were refusing to deliver parcels to Nasta Loika with medicines, personal hygiene products and warm clothes that she urgently needed.

On 24 December 2022, after five 15-day detention terms, criminal charges were brought against Nasta Loika: under Article 342.1 (“Organization and preparation of actions that grossly violate public order, or active participation in them”) and 130.3 (“inciting racial, national, religious or other social enmity or discord”). The basis for the latest accusation was Nasta's alleged participation in the writing of a report on the persecution of members of anarchist groups in Belarus in 2018. The report provides a critical assessment of the activities of police officers, which the investigators have qualified as "inciting enmity" against police officers as “a professional group”, an “extremism” related charge. This is yet another example of the blatant criminalization of human rights work by the Belarusian authorities.

On 20 June 2023, Nasta was found guilty of the latter charge and sentenced to seven years in prison. On 3 October 2023, the appeal against this sentence took place. The sentence was upheld. In November 2023, Nasta was transferred from Minsk pre-trial detention center to Homel prison colony, where she is serving her sentence now. In addition, on 12 October 2023, the State Security Committee (KGB) included Nasta in the List of organizations and individuals involved in terrorist activities – now any financial transactions involving her are prohibited, and people raising funds to support her may potentially face charges of “financing terrorist activities.”

In August 2025 Nasta was moved to confinement in a four-square-meter cell. She was held there for six months in total isolation until late January 2026.

At the end of January 2026 Nasta was transferred to general conditions in the colony. She started working at a sewing factory, like the majority of other imprisoned women in Homel colony. Prisoners work at least eight hours a day and are paid five–10 euros per month.

Nasta’s first lawyer faced state reprisals for representing her and was forced to exile. Her second lawyer was disbarred in retribution. This was a clear violation of Nasta’s right to a fair trial, including the right to be represented by a lawyer of one’s choice.

More than 1,200 persons imprisoned for politically motivated cases are still in prison in Belarus. This includes Viasna human rights defenders Marfa Rabkova, Valiantsin Stefanovich and volunteer Vital Chopik.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Belarusian, Russian, English
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 02.09.2026
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Nasta (Anastasia) Loika (she/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: **Belarus: Further information: Human rights defender faces criminal charges: Nasta Loika - Amnesty International**