

To the Oktyabrsky District Court of Vitebsk city

210029, Vitebsk, Pravdy Str., app.34

On the detention and administrative proceeding against Pavel Levin

To the Honorable Chairperson of the Court,

It has come to our attention that human rights activist Pavel Levinov was detained by the police on 26 March 2017, while monitoring peaceful protests in the city of Vitebsk charged of violating article. 23.34 of the Administrative Code of the Republic of Belarus "on participation in public events".

As a result, international human rights organisation "Civil Rights Defenders" declares the following to the High Court.

Based on the information we have to date, it is clear that Pavel Levinov was present at the peaceful protests in Vitebsk as an observer and freelance correspondent for the newspaper Vitebsky Courier. In this capacity, he exercised the right to collect information about current events for the purpose of disseminating it, inter alia, through the media. He was in possession of an authorising document allowing him to perform monitoring duties from the "Belarusian Helsinki Committee"; while his status of observer was confirmed by a special badge.

We would like to draw to the attention of the High Court the fact that according to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Part 2 of Article 19), which entered into force for Belarus on 23.03.1976, everyone shall have the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice provided that these actions do not infringe on the respect of the rights or reputations of others, as well as do not encroach on the national security or public order, public health or morals.

Also, according to Art. 34 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, citizens of the Republic of Belarus are guaranteed the right to receive, store and disseminate full, reliable and timely information on the activities of state bodies, public associations, political, economic, cultural and international life and the state of the environment.

Given the facts provided above, as well as Pavel Levinov compliance with the norms of international law in the field of human rights and with national legislation of the republic of Belarus, we call on the High Court to act in accordance with the international obligations taken by the Republic of Belarus and to immediately stop the administrative proceeding against Pavel Levinov as it is clear there were no elements of administrative offence in the actions he had committed.

Yours faithfully,

Joanna KUROSZ,

Programme Director, EURASIA

Civil Rights Defenders

