President Alyaksandr Lukashenka

Vul. Karla Marksa 38

220016 Minsk

Belarus

 10 October 2018, World Day against the Death Penalty

Dear Mr President,

Alerted by ACAT-Luxembourg, Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture and the Death Penalty, I wish to convey to you my deep concern about Mr Aliaksandr Zhylnikau and Mr Viachaslau Sukharko.

At the end of May 2018, the Supreme Court of Belarus upheld the death sentences handed down by the Minsk City Court on Aliaksandr Zhylnikau and Viachaslau Sukharko for the murder of three people. According to their defence, the verdict was not established on the basis of proven facts, but merely on the assumptions of the judges, who seemed to have sided with the prosecution. The investigation and the subsequent trials violated the two men’s rights to life, to physical integrity, to a fair trial and not to be subjected to degrading treatment, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

We do not underestimate the seriousness of the crime allegedly committed by Mr Zhylnikau and Mr Sukharko. However, these practices, as well as the death penalty – which is proven to have no deterrent effect – constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading forms of treatment or punishment which run contrary to the ICCPR and the UN Convention against Torture, both of which have been ratified by the Republic of Belarus.

We therefore urge you:

* to commute the death penalty handed down on Aliaksandr Zhylnikau and Viachaslau Sukharko;
* to accept the calls by the international community for a moratorium on the death penalty in Belarus.

We thank you for the consideration you will give to our concerns.

Name

Address