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Dear Head of Penitentiary Directorate,

I am concerned about the treatment of Vladislav Sharkovsky who is serving a 10-year prison sentence for a minor, non-violent drug-related offence in Penal Colony Number 22 ('Volchie Nory') in Ivatsevichi.

As far as I am aware, Vladislav Sharkovsky has developed health complications following his arrest and imprisonment, and has been suffering from headache, worsening cough, blurred vision and stomach pain for the last 14 months. Furthermore, he has developed a trauma after discovering the dead body of another teenager inmate who had committed suicide. Despite multiple requests, the prison administration has not provided him with the adequate medical and psychological care he requires.

According to his mother, on 22 April 2019 Vladislav Sharkovsky was pressured by prison officials to write a note stating that he did not require any medical assistance. It has also transpired that he has been threatened by the prison administration that he will face reprisals if his mother continues to complain about his prison conditions.

Vladislav Sharkovsky was 17 years old when he became a courier for an anonymous internet-based company which paid him for collecting and delivering packages. According to his indictment, he was distributing illegal drugs as part of an organised group, for which he was convicted and sentenced to 10 years in prison, under Part 4 of Article 328 of the Criminal Code. This is despite Vladislav Sharkovsky not knowing who his anonymous employer was, and despite the employer remaining "unknown" to the prosecution. Children who commit minor, non-violent drug-related offences should not be imprisoned. In Vladislav Sharkovsky's case, who was a child at the time of his offence, this means he should be immediately released and his criminal record cleared.

Vladislav Sharkovsky's right to a fair trial and his rights under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child have been variously violated. Following his arrest, still a child, he did not have access to his family, nor to a lawyer until a day later, and during this time he was forced to sign a self-incriminating statement dictated by the investigating officer. The current failure to provide Vladislav Sharkovsky with adequate health care may amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

I urge you to ensure that Vladislav Sharkovsky is provided with the health care he requires and protected from any form of harassment or reprisals.

Yours sincerely,