

Yauhen Syarheevich Khitryk
Head of the Pre-Trial Detention Centre No. 6
Vul. Brestskaya 258 B
Baranavichy 225413, Belarus
Fax: +375 163 65 02 01
e-mail: sizo6_brest@mia.by

Dear Mr Khitryk,

I am writing to express my grave concern for the health of taxi driver Viachaslau Rahashchuk, who is currently remanded in the pre-trial detention centre No. 6 and is suffering from serious health conditions which are the result of torture and other ill-treatment and require immediate hospitalisation.

Viachaslau Rahashchuk was violently and arbitrarily arrested by at least five police officers in Pinsk on the evening of 10 August while walking with his sister and her 12-year old son. Protests in the town were continuing following mass allegations of electoral fraud and the previous day's official announcement of the election results. He has committed no crime and his arrest and detention are arbitrary. He has been charged under Article 293 Part 1 of the Belarusian Criminal Code (mass riots) which carries a prison sentence of up to 15 years.

On 11 August, one of Viachaslau Rahashchuk's former cellmates contacted his mother and told her that Viachaslau Rahashchuk had been very badly beaten by prison officers. He said Viachaslau Rahashchuk had a hematoma behind his ear, three cuts to his head and bruises all over his spine. He also described there being pools of blood in the corridors from all those who were beaten.

Since then, Viachaslau Rahashchuk has had a continuous ringing noise in his head. When his family asked for him to be sent for a head-scan they were told by a medic at the detention centre that he is fine and to keep sending him medication to help with his symptoms. According to recent credible reports, Viachaslau Rahashchuk has been losing consciousness for up to twenty minutes at a time and has developed a tumour on the left side of his ribcage. The continued requests from his family for him to be examined by an independent doctor have been declined, and he is not receiving the medical treatment he urgently requires.

I urge you to:

- Immediately transfer Viachaslau Rahashchuk to a hospital with adequate medical facilities to assess and treat his deteriorating health condition;
- Take any steps within your powers to ensure that Viachaslau Rahashchuk is not returned to pre-trial detention but released immediately and unconditionally as he has committed no crime and like, thousands of others in Belarus since 9 August, has been detained arbitrarily.

Yours sincerely,