



On July 26, 2023 Hrodna Regional Court passed a verdict, which found Yulia Yurgilevich (a lawyer deprived of the right to profession) and Pavel Mozheika (a journalist) guilty of other assistance to extremist activity, committed repeatedly, by a group of persons by prior conspiracy and sentenced them to 6 years of imprisonment.

It became known from the prosecution, announced in court, that Yulia Yurgilevich was accused of publicizing the fact of deprivation of her right to profession and for information about the sentence against political prisoner Ales Pushkin. In the opinion of the court, this is what the other assistance to extremist activity was expressed in. The fact that the prosecution failed to establish either the time, place, or the way the journalist transmitted information to the "Belsat" TV channel adds to the unreasonableness of the accusation against our colleague.

In accordance with the Constitution and international legal acts ratified by the Republic of Belarus, everyone has the right to freely express his or her opinion. In accordance with the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, lawyers, like other citizens, have the right to freedom of expression, opinion and assembly.

The fact of communicating to anyone information about the termination of a license or about a court hearing - that is, information contained in open sources and not restricted for dissemination - cannot constitute a crime. The accusations of this type do not pursue a legitimate aim, but are aimed solely at intimidating lawyers, restricting them from communicating with journalists and forcing them to refuse any publicity in their professional activities.

The Belarusian Republican Bar Association as the main body of lawyers' self-government, the Hrodna Regional Bar Association as a territorial bar association,

where Yulia Yurgilevich was a member, did not render any assistance to our colleague, did not react both to the fact of her detention and to the fact of the verdict against her.

It should be noted that in the courtroom Yulia Yurgilevich was wearing a prison robe with the inscription on the back - "**punishment cell-2**". The fact of being in the courtroom in a prison robe and in a cage violates the presumption of innocence of a person accused in a criminal case, which also does not comply with the Constitution of Belarus and international legal acts, in particular, Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

At the court hearing Yulia Yurgilevich stated that she was not allowed to familiarize herself with the criminal case before the trial, which is a violation of Article 14 (3b) of the Covenant. However, the court, after this statement, did not provide Yulia Yurgilevich with an opportunity to prepare her defense. At the same time, on July 20, 2023, when the defendants were about to make their last word, the court, at the request of the state prosecutor, resumed the trial in order for the prosecution to provide additional evidence. This indicates the lack of equality of arms between the parties in the course of the trial, and in the aggregate, these facts indicate a violation of Yulia Yurgilevich's right to a fair trial

The Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers [drew](#) attention to the gross violation of the norms of international law in connection with the prosecution of the lawyer for providing legal assistance, violation of her right to free expression of opinion, right to access to information, as well as the right to a fair trial.

We demand the immediate release of Yulia Yurgilevich from custody and termination of criminal prosecution against her.