

H.E. Mr. Sergei Aleinik, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Lenina street 19, 220030  
Minsk, Belarus

Groningen, 2023

Dear Minister,

On February 28 2023, the Supreme Court considered behind closed doors the appeal of Marfa Rabkova, human rights defender and coordinator of the volunteer service of the Human Rights Center Viasna. Rabkova received 14 years and 9 months of imprisonment in a general-security penal colony and a fine of 22,400 Belarusian rubles. She was found guilty of "organizing, participating in and training others to participate in mass riots", "inciting social hostility towards the government" and "involvement in a criminal organization", among other charges. Marfa Rabkova was detained on 17 September 2020.

Rabkova is being targeted solely for her legitimate activities as a human rights defender, such as observing demonstrations and documenting evidence of human rights violations, including torture and other ill-treatment of peaceful protesters by law enforcement officials. She has committed no crime.

I therefore urge you to quash Rabkova's conviction and ensure she is released immediately and unconditionally. Pending her release, I urge you to ensure she has access to medical care and is treated in accordance with international human rights standards, in particular the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Yours sincerely,