



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Peace Activist Olga Karatch Was Sentenced to 12 Years in Prison Due to Her Human Rights Activities

Belarus must stop prosecuting peace activists and human rights defenders!

11 July 2024

The Global Peacebuilders Network (GPN) condemns the 12-year prison sentence and a fine of 170,000 Euros imposed on one of the initial and active participants of GPN, peacebuilder and human rights defender Olga Karatch in the case she was tried in Belarus. Olga Karatch's organization is also a nominee of Nobel Peace Award-2024 and the laureate of many international human rights awards.

On July 8, 2024 Brest Regional Court announced the verdict of human rights defender Olga Karatch, head of the International Center for civil initiatives "Our House". Olga Karatch is accused of "conspiracy to seize power by unconstitutional means" (part 1 of Article 357 of the Belarusian Criminal Code); "promotion of extremist activity" (part 1 and part 2 of Article 361-4 of the Belarusian Criminal Code); "discrediting the Republic of Belarus" (Article 369-1 of the Criminal Code).

The decision announced on July 8 in the Brest Regional Court creates an extremely worrying situation for the security of Olga Karatch and her organization International Center for Civil Initiatives "Our House" Nash Dom, which supports war resisters and conscientious objectors in Belarus. This decision also poses a threat to the security of all peace activists and human rights defenders in Belarus.

Karatch, through her organization 'Our House', carries out numerous activities in defending human rights and advocating the right to conscientious objection in Belarus. She is also supporting Belarusian citizens who have fled to other countries to avoid military service in Belarus. Because of these activities she has been subject to multiple prosecutions and even she is facing the risk of deportation from Lithuania where she is currently based. Olga is worrying for her safety and that of her family in Lithuania as she waits the sentence for other 2 cases in Belarus.

The Global Peacebuilders Network (GPN) makes it clear that it stands by its member, peace activist and human rights defender Olga Karach. 12 years prison sentence given to Olga Karatch, who was threatened with trials and punishments by the Belarusian regime for her work supporting war resisters and conscientious objectors in Belarus, is unacceptable.

We stand with Olga Karatch, who was threatened, tried and punished for her peace activities!

Released by the Global Peacebuilders Network

MORE INFORMATION:

Press release of "Our House" Nash Dom, WHRD Olga Karatch sentenced to 12 years in prison in absentia in Belarus: <https://news.house/62484>

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INTERVIEWS please contact:

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The **Global Peacebuilders Network** includes key leaders from civil society organizations who are working to end conflicts in different areas around the world and to create a sustainable peace in their countries. The mission of the GPN is to build peaceful communities by using innovative, inclusive and local models. Through a systemic approach for peacebuilding, an approach that recognizes the complexity of modern conflicts and an approach that connects the multiple sectors working for peace, as well as by making strong linkages between the local, national, regional, and global levels working for peace, the GPN creates a stronger voice for a just and peaceful world.

The Global Peacebuilders Network organizes the Global Peacebuilders Summit per year.

The **Global Peacebuilders Summit** brings together experienced peace builders from all around the world. They work directly on peace processes, are connected internationally and are interested in a global discourse on the role of civil society in peace processes.

The Global Peacebuilders Summit will build up a community which is strengthening their impact on the ground. By collegial exchange at eye level, networking among each other, new contacts and inspirations for the work on site. The summit provides a highly acclaimed opportunity to formulate jointly recommendations on how the peacebuilders commitment can be supported internationally and can be even more effective.

The important contribution of civil society organizations in peace processes will be highlighted in European media and in the public. The Global Peacebuilders also meet with representants of the Federal Foreign Office and German Parliament.