

From: Jan Haverkamp

Sent: 07 September 2020 12:40 PM

To: jonas.ebbesson; ECE-Participation; Fiona Marshall

Cc: [Emails redacted]

Subject: Ms Irina Sukhy of EkoDom arrested in Minsk, Belarus - urgent request for more clarity

Dear Mr. Ebbesson, dear Ms Marshall,

Yesterday afternoon, the head of the organisation EkoDom in Minsk, Belarus, and member of Nuclear Transparency Watch, Ms. Irina Sukhy, was taken from her home by unidentified police and taken into custody - allegedly for participating in an unauthorised protest on 3 September in Minsk, whereas Ms Sukhy was on that day around 200 km outside of Minsk. In the early evening, police searched her home and took laptops and internet router.

Ms. Sukhy is currently held in custody and awaiting a fast trial this afternoon at 14:00 at the court of the Soviet District of Minsk.

I would like to ask you to urgently use your contacts with the authorities in Belarus to ask for clarification about the backgrounds of her arrest, and seek guarantees for her safety and legal rights.

Ms Sukhy was one of the four people who were harassed when she tried to participate during the Environmental Impact Assessment procedure for the Astravetz nuclear power plant, resulting in a penalty for hooliganism (i.e. "shouting abusive language in the street"). In this case, Belarus has already been found in non-compliance with the Aarhus Convention by its Meeting of Parties on the basis of non-compliance with art. 3(9) of the Convention (non-harassment of citizens using their rights under the Convention)

On social media it is widely expected that Ms Sukhy is targeted now for her critical following of the developments of the construction of the Astravetz nuclear power station. An illustration can be found in the New York Times of today (last paragraph):

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/06/world/europe/protests-belarus-lukashenko.html>.

And in another gesture toward Moscow, Belarusian security officials have arrested Irina Sukhi, an environmental activist who has campaigned against a nuclear power station built in Belarus near the border with Lithuania by Rosatom, a state-owned Russian company. The arrest was reported on Sunday by Ms. Sukhi's daughter, Sophie Sadovskaya.

In the run-up to the contested elections in Belarus of three weeks ago, permission to load fuel into the Astravetz nuclear power plant unit 1 was issued before the operation license became active. Shortly before the elections, a special law was passed to ease the physical start-up of the Astravetz NPP in order to allow also other commissioning steps to be carried out before the operation license is given. These steps are generally seen as an attempt to create positive PR for the upcoming elections.

In the meantime, measures concluded from the ENSREG peer-reviewed stress tests have not yet been implemented. Ms Sukhy was one of the people drawing attention to these issues.

Given the situation, I would kindly but urgently like to ask you to contact the Belarussian authorities to ask for clarification of the situation and for guarantees for the safety of Ms Sukhy and the upholding of due process.

Sincerely,

Jan Haverkamp
vice-chair of Nuclear Transparency Watch
senior expert nuclear energy at Greenpeace Netherlands
senior expert nuclear energy at WISE International