

## JUSTICE AND PEACE LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGNS

### GREETINGS CARD CAMPAIGN WINTER 2023

*Thank-you to everyone who sent cards to China last week. This week we feature a young catholic man and a human rights defender in Belarus.*

At this time of year we remember some of the many people being persecuted today, by sending them a greetings card. Action by Christians against Torture (ACATUK) selects a few cases of individuals, groups and communities who are experiencing human rights abuses.

It is now **26 years** since this parish started sending greetings cards to the persecuted!

*Thank-you for this invaluable support which is deeply appreciated.*

Please do follow the guidelines carefully **and please check the postage.**

#### **POSTAGE RATES (correct at the time of going to print)**

Weight up to and including ...	Europe	Rest of the world
100g	£2.20	£2.20

*Simple messages of goodwill are enough. Please never include political comments*

*When a non-religious card is advised, please avoid referring to religion in your message.*

*(For example, rather than writing 'you are in our prayers', write 'you are in our thoughts' )*

*Please put your name and address (including country) on your card (or your name and just your town)*

Please let the office know if you would prefer to have the complete set of ACAT details.

In April 2018, waiting at a bus stop, 17-year old **Emil Ostrovko** was beaten by police officers, arrested and convicted for distributing illicit drugs. While working after school as a courier for an online company, his employer had told him the parcels he was delivering contained legal smoking mixtures. He received a ten-year prison sentence for drug trafficking, later reduced to eight. Investigators never looked for the owner of the company, nor for anyone else. Some 15,000 children and young persons are serving lengthy prison sentences in Belarus for petty drugs offences. They are treated far worse than other offenders and forced to do long hours of hard labour. Emil was not allowed to carry his asthma medicine and got frostbite from clearing snow with his bare hands. Things improved a little when he went to an adult prison.

**Please send a (religious or non-religious) greeting and message of encouragement. You can mention ACAT and include your home address.**

*Emil is keen on studying and reading, and is particularly interested in economics, business and innovation. You can send any of the latest news in these fields, alongside other interesting stories which you feel may appeal to him. Emil is also a Catholic, so you can send him appropriate Christmas greetings.*

Emil Vadimovich Ostrovko  
Correctional Colony Number 2  
Ul. Sikorskogo 1, otryad 1  
Bobruisk  
Mogilevskaya oblast  
213800  
Belarus



**Nasta (Anastasia) Loika** is a Belarusian human rights defender working in the field of human rights education. Nasta was sentenced to seven years in a penal colony for 'inciting radical, national, religious or other social enmity or discord' on 20 June 2023. On 6 September 2022 Nasta was arbitrarily detained as she was leaving Minsk City Court after attending a hearing in the trial against fellow human rights defenders Marfa Rabkova, Andrei Chapyuk, and their eight co-defendants. She was temporarily released on 5 October 2022, only to be detained again. Nasta was arrested on 28 October 2022 and has been arbitrarily detained ever since. During her detention, she was denied access to her lawyer, essential medical treatment and other basic necessities, including warm clothes and drinking water. Nasta reported she had been tortured through electric shock questioning and that whilst in detention she was left out in the courtyard for eight hours without outerwear in cold weather. Nasta has been consistently denied adequate medical care, which amounts to inhumane and degrading treatment.

**Please send a message (do not mention ACAT) to:**

Anastasia Loika  
Penal Colony No.4  
3 Antoshikina Street  
Gomel, 246035  
The Republic of Belarus

