

**ACAT (Action by Christians Against Torture), Amnesty International France,
Russie-Libertés**

For immediate release

A French-Russian human rights activist at risk of extradition to Russia

Russian authorities have filed an official request for the extradition of Nicolay Koblyakov, a French-Russian human rights activist and Koblyakov has been placed under house arrest.

2 September 2014 – Yesterday (1 September 2014) at 16:00 the Prosecutor of the City of Sofia presented to the Sofia City Court its request for the arrest of Nikolay Koblyakov, a French-Russian human rights activist. The request was issued following receipt of the formal request for extradition of Koblyakov, received from the Russian Federation.

Also yesterday, and as required by Bulgarian procedure, the City Court of Sofia held a hearing to determine the conditions of Koblyakov's detention for the next stages of the procedure, and decided to place Koblyakov under house arrest.

The next stage of the procedure will be a hearing before the City Court of Sofia on the question of Koblyakov's extradition to Russia. While the date for this hearing has not yet been fixed, it is expected to occur within 7 days.

Nicolay Koblyakov is a social entrepreneur and human rights activist with dual French-Russian nationality. Koblyakov is an active member of the French human rights NGO Russie-Libertés and he is the founder of Senior Group, which develops residences for aged care.

Koblyakov was detained by Bulgarian authorities at passport control at Sofia airport on Tuesday 29 July 2014, upon his arrival on a flight from Paris. Koblyakov was arrested pursuant to an Interpol Red Notice for the alleged criminal offense of "fraud on a grand scale," in relation to events taking place in 2004-2005. Koblyakov was released from police custody on Friday 1 August, under the obligation that he remains in Bulgaria pending the resolution of the extradition procedure.

Koblyakov's defense counsel in Bulgaria, Biliana Kotsakova, seeks to emphasize to the Bulgarian court as well as to the public that "this matter is about much more than Nicolay Koblyakov. It is about basic human rights, and notably the right to a fair trial and the right to be free from torture and inhumane treatment, as provided under the European Convention on Human Rights. Neither of these fundamental rights is protected in Russia – and not just for human rights activists like Mr. Koblyakov, but for anyone."

"Our [investigation on torture in Russia](#) shows that its use is commonplace and deeply rooted at all stages of the criminal justice system, from arrest by the police to the life of convicts in

penitentiary facilities,” declared Christine Laroque, Asia-Russia desk manager at [ACAT](#). "Regarding his background, we believe that Mr. Koblyakov faces risk of torture or ill-treatment upon a forcible return to Russia."

“In light of Mr. Koblyakov’s activities as a French active critic of the power in place in Russia and in favor of democracy, any extradition to Russia should be considered as a breach of the standards of ECHR and EU laws“ declared Koblyakov’s defense counsel in France, Ivan Terel, lawyer at the Paris Bar.

“Nicolay Koblyakov is an active member of [Russie-Libertés](#), if he is extradited to Russia he could face an unfair trial and a politically motivated sentence because of his activism” declared Alexis Prokopiev, president of the NGO Russie-Libertés.

“The repression in Russia has drastically intensified over the last years”, pointed out Genevieve Garrigos, president of [Amnesty International France](#). “Human rights defenders have been convicted for fabricated cases to heavy prison sentences after unfair trials.”

Immediately upon Koblyakov’s arrest, human rights activists protested his extradition outside both the French embassy in Sofia and the Bulgarian embassy in Paris. To date more than 21,900 people have signed a [petition opposing Koblyakov’s extradition to Russia](#).

Today [ACAT](#), [Amnesty International-France](#) and [Russie-Libertés](#) ask not to extradite Nicolay Koblyakov to Russia.

You can hear directly from Koblyakov and read more about him at this link:
<https://storify.com/freenikolay/free-nikolay-koblyakov>.

And you can visit Nikolay Koblyakov’s Facebook page here:
<https://www.facebook.com/nkoblyakov>

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**No to extradition
to Russia of
Nicolay
KOBLYAKOV !**