

# A CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION

**Spt  
17–20  
2010**

**ALEXEI  
GASKAROV**



**MAXIM  
SOLOPOV**

## IN SUPPORT OF KHMINKI HOSTAGES

On July 28, 2010, hundreds of young antifascists and anarchists spontaneously demonstrated outside the administration building in Khimki, a suburb of Moscow, in defense of the Khimki Forest, which was then being cutting down. The demonstration received a great deal of public attention, and authorities responded with a wave of repression. The following day, two well-known activists, Alexei Gaskarov and Maxim Solopov, were arrested. They now face up to seven years in prison for disorderly conduct, although there is no evidence of their involvement. Meanwhile, police continue to hunt down other activists, especially those involved in the anti-fascist movement.

The campaign to save the Khimki Forest has been going on for past three years. The authorities want to build a segment of a planned Moscow-Saint

Petersburg toll highway through the forest. This would negatively impact environmental conditions in the region. Despite the availability of alternative routes that do not require felling the forest and vigorous protests by environmentalists and residents against the route, the authorities long ignored the voice of society and on several occasions took measures to suppress their critics.

Khimki authorities and the project subcontractor used violence and other unlawful tactics against Khimki Forest defenders. They refused to permit protests, recruited nationalist thugs to break up a peaceful protest camp organized by environmentalists and residents, and illegally arrested journalists covering the story. Nearly two years ago, Mikhail Beketov, editor of the newspaper Khimkinskaya Pravda and a critic of the Khimki administration, was severely beaten by persons unknown;

Sergei Protozanov, the layout man at another local opposition paper, was murdered in similar circumstances six months later.

After the July 28 demo, Russian law enforcement unleashed a dragnet against antifascists. People on the radar of the Center for Extremism Prevention and the FSB for their involvement with antifascism have been forcibly taken in for questioning. In several cases they have been subjected to physical coercion to compel them to give the testimony required by investigators. Illegal searches have been carried out in their apartments. All these actions on the part of law enforcement are violations of Russian and international law.

Frightened by growing protests against the logging of the Khimki Forest, the authorities have finally agreed to review the advisability of the planned route for the highway. But this does

not mean victory. Alexei Gaskarov and Maxim Solopov are still in police custody for no reason at all. They are hostages.

The next hearing in their case is scheduled for late September. A judge will decide whether to keep them in custody pending completion of the investigation and trial. We must do everything in our power to set them free. The Campaign for the Release of the Khimki Hostages calls on people around the world to organize days of action on September 17–20 to pressure the authorities to release Alexei and Max.

We ask you to hold protests outside of Russian embassies, consulates, trade missions, and cultural centers, as well as at events and concerts connected to Russia. We also ask you to send faxes, e-mails, and protest letters to law enforcement officials and the country's leaders.

**WWW.  
KHMINKIBATTLE  
.ORG**

where to send your protest letters now: <http://chtodelat.wordpress.com/2010/09/01/max-and-alexei/>