

Statement by Mikhail Khodorkovsky

The tragic situation surrounding Vasily Aleksanyan, my gravely ill former colleague and lawyer, has shown that there are a great many people in Russia who are not indifferent and that the foundations of civil society exist.

That gives cause for optimism.

I hope that the soulless bureaucrats who are prepared to let a man die, just in order to please their bosses, are fewer among us than those who are moved by conscience. I'm convinced that defending the rights of everyone who is in need of such support is the moral duty of all Russia's citizens.

I am sincerely grateful to everyone who has reacted to these outrageous acts of inhuman torture, perpetrated on an innocent man who is at death's door, in order to force him to give false testimony against others.

Since Vasily has now been transferred to a specialist civilian clinic I am calling off my hunger strike.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky
Chita pre-trial detention centre
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