

International appeal demands: Free Moldovan activist Pavel Grigorchuk!

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Pavel Grigorchuk speaks at protest in front of the Moldovan Parliament before his

arrest on March 21.

Pavel Grigorchuk is a fighter against capitalist oligarchy in Moldova, a former Soviet republic in Eastern Europe. Grigorchuk, a militant communist and anti-fascist, has been targeted by the regime of wealthy oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc many times. Despite court-imposed [restrictions on his political activity](#) as a member of the Petrenko Group political prisoners, [he continues to fight](#) for the country's liberation from oligarch domination. Struggle-La Lucha joins in the international call for his freedom.

Freedom for Pavel Grigorchuk

We, the undersigned, urgently demand that the government of Moldova release civic activist Pavel Grigorchuk from preventive detention in Chisinau. Grigorchuk was arrested March 21 after leading an anti-corruption protest outside the Moldovan Parliament.

Following the protest, Grigorchuk encountered Sergey Syrbu, a leading member of the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM), dominated by oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc. Syrbu insulted and cursed at Grigorchuk, who responded by slapping the deputy's cheek. Within an hour, police descended on him. Grigorchuk was placed in preventive custody for 30 days and reportedly faces up to five years in prison.

According to Grigorchuk's attorney, the activist, who suffers from asthma, is currently confined to the basement of jail PU-13, Building 3 (SIZO), in dangerously cold and damp conditions that severely threaten his health. This blatant act of political retribution must end.

The prescribed punishment for slapping someone in public is a fine of 200 lei, or approximately 10 euros. But because Grigorchuk is a committed opponent of Moldova's oligarch-dominated regime, he has been targeted for political repression.

In cooperation with media outlets owned by Vlad Plahotniuc, Deputy Syrbu has concocted a fairytale version of events in which he supposedly suffered head trauma and a concussion from the slap and had to be hospitalized. Syrbu has not allowed any of these claims to be independently verified.

This is not the first time the authorities under Plahotniuc's influence have targeted Grigorchuk. In 2014, he was arrested in the so-called "Antifa Case," where he and another activist were falsely charged with trying to disrupt the country's elections. In September 2015, Grigorchuk and several others were brutally attacked and arrested during a peaceful anti-oligarchy protest led by former MP Grigory Petrenko, leader of the opposition party Our Home is Moldova. The "Petrenko Group" were jailed for several months and only released after an international outcry - though the defendants still face serious restrictions on their right to travel and political activity. Lead defendant Petrenko was forced to seek asylum in Germany. Their case is soon to be heard by the European Court of Human Rights.

All of this establishes a clear pattern of politically motivated repression against Grigorchuk.

We demand:

- That Pavel Grigorchuk be immediately removed from the dangerous conditions at PU-13, Building 3, and given appropriate medical attention in a hospital;
- That Grigorchuk be released from preventive detention;
- Drop all charges against Grigorchuk stemming from the incident on March 21.

Signers (list in formation):

Individuals:

Jose Maria Sison, chairperson, International League of Peoples' Struggle

Berta Joubert-Ceci, convener, International Tribunal on U.S. Colonial Crimes in Puerto Rico

Gloria Verdieu, Committee Against Police Brutality-San Diego and Coalition to Free Mumia & All Political Prisoners

Sergei Kirichuk, coordinator, Borotba-Berlin

Alexey Albu, coordinator, Borotba-Donbass

Victor Shapinov, coordinator, Borotba

Stanislav Retinsky, secretary of the Central Committee, Communist Party of Donetsk People's Republic

Greg Butterfield, Struggle-La Lucha newspaper (U.S.)

Milos Raickovich, composer and conductor, adjunct assistant professor, College of Staten Island, CUNY (U.S.)

Bistra Staykova (Bulgaria)

John Catalinotto, New York (U.S.)

Dr. Dimitrios S. Patelis, associate professor of philosophy, Technical University of Crete (Greece)

Organizations:

United Communist Party of Russia, Central Committee

Socialist Unity Party (U.S.)

Prisoners Solidarity Committee (U.S.)

International Action Center-West Coast (U.S.)

New Communist Party of Britain

Communist Revolutionary Action (Greece)

Workers International Vanguard League (South Africa)

Baltimore People's Power Assembly (U.S.)

Solidarity with Novorossiia & Antifascists in Ukraine (U.S.)

Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice-Los Angeles (U.S.)

