



**AMS Committee on Human
Rights of Mathematicians**

*Attn: Dr. Karen Saxe
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January 26, 2021

Eamon Gilmore
European Union Special Representative for Human Rights
eamon.gilmore@ext.eeas.europa.eu

Re: Case of Azat Miftakhov

Dear Special Representative Gilmore,

The AMS Committee on the Human Rights of Mathematicians is contacting you to express concern regarding the case of Azat Miftakhov, a PhD graduate student in the Department of Mathematics and Mechanics of the Moscow State University, who was sentenced to 6 years in prison on January 18, 2021 by the Golovinsky Court in Moscow.

The American Mathematical Society, with over 30,000 individual members worldwide, is a professional organization dedicated to advancing mathematical research and education and connecting the diverse global mathematical community through our publications, meetings and conferences, MathSciNet, professional services, advocacy, and awareness programs. The AMS is committed to supporting the human rights of mathematicians around the world, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Azat Miftakhov had been held under arrest in pretrial detention in Moscow since February 2019 on a putative vandalism charge related to a protest action at the offices of the United Russia party in January 2018. Miftakhov pleaded not guilty and denied the charges against him. Apparently the only actual damage resulting from that protest consisted of a broken window. Credible reports also indicate that Miftakhov has been subjected to considerable mistreatment while incarcerated. The Public Monitoring Commission, an independent Russian watchdog organization overseeing prisons, determined that after his arrest Miftakhov's body bore the signs of torture, apparently inflicted by the interrogators attempting to extract a false confession. A Russian human organization "Memorial" recognized Azat Miftakhov as a political prisoner.

Azat Miftakhov is a promising young mathematician, who recently, even while in prison, wrote two new mathematical research articles on probability theory. The first of these articles has recently been published in the Bulletin of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and the second has been posted to the international preprint server arXiv.org.

Azat Miftakhov's trial, which has been delayed multiple times, finally concluded on December 25, 2020. The case has been heard in the Golovinsky District Court in Moscow by Judge Bazarov. Apparently much of the case against Miftakhov was based on the testimony of a "secret" government witness who died several months before the trial and thus could not be cross-examined by the defense. We note that a recent decision of the European Court of Human Rights in November 2020 in relation to a case from Turkey held that such "secret" testimony, particularly in the trials of political dissidents, cannot be used as a basis for conviction. On January 18, 2021 Judge Bazarov announced a verdict in the case, finding Azat Miftakhov guilty of the charge of hooliganism and sentencing him to six years in prison, to be served in a general regime penal colony, the maximum sentence requested by the prosecutors. Miftakhov's lawyer indicated that they plan to appeal the verdict.

The AMS has been continuously monitoring the case of Azat Miftakhov and called that he be given a fair and transparent trial and receive humane treatment while in detention. The AMS Council issued a statement of concern in the case of Miftakhov in January 2020, affirmed at the April 2020 Council meeting. Numerous other scientific societies from around the world expressed support for Azat Miftakhov and petitions in his support have gathered thousands of signatures.

We draw your attention to Miftakhov's case because of both the clearly excessive sentence (even assuming that the charges, which Miftakhov denies, were true) and of the serious human rights and due process violations that happened since Miftakhov's arrest. We believe that Azat Miftakhov continues to face significant risk to his life while incarcerated, especially after he is transferred to the penal colony to serve the remainder of his sentence, as those prison camps in Russia are notoriously dangerous and poorly supervised. We hope that as the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights you will look into this case closely.

Sincerely,



Ilya Kapovich
Dr., Professor
Chair of the AMS Committee on the Human Rights of Mathematicians