

## EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

### REGIONAL TRENDS

- Belarus resumed executions in April 2016 after a 17-month hiatus. Two people remain on death row in Belarus.
- Kazakhstan imposed one death sentence.

COUNTRY	2016 RECORDED EXECUTIONS	2016 RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES	PEOPLE KNOWN TO BE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH AT THE END OF 2016
Belarus	4+	4	2
Kazakhstan	0	1	1
Russia	0	0	0
Tajikistan	0	0	0

### NOTABLE COUNTRY DEVELOPMENTS

Courts in **Belarus** imposed four death sentences. At least four people were executed during the year.

Syarhei Ivanou was executed in April, the first person known to have been executed in Belarus since November 2014. He was sentenced to death in 2015 for murder, theft and robbery committed in 2013. His brother had petitioned the UN Human Rights Committee, arguing that Syarhei Ivanou's trial was unfair. The Committee had requested the Belarusian authorities not to carry out the execution while the case was under consideration.<sup>51</sup>

Syarhei Ivanou's execution was followed by those of Hyanadz Yakavitski, Syarhei Khmialeuski and Ivan Kulesh in November.

In January, the Minsk Regional Court found Hyanadz Yakavitski guilty of a murder committed in 2015. Hyanadz Yakavitski denied the charges against him and lodged an appeal against his conviction and death sentence with the Supreme Court and an appeal for clemency to the

<sup>51</sup> Such requests are binding on states parties to the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Belarus acceded to in 1992.

President. His defence lawyers maintained that vital evidence was omitted at his trial.

Syarhei Khmialeuski was sentenced to death in February for theft and murder. The UN Human Rights Committee had requested the Belarusian authorities not to carry out the execution pending the examination of his case.

Ivan Kulesh was sentenced to death in 2015 for murder, theft and robbery. His sentence was upheld in March 2016.

Syarhei Vostryakau and Kiryl Kazachok are the last people known to be on death row in Belarus. Syarhei Vostryakau was sentenced to death in May, having been found guilty of two separate cases of rape and murder. Kiryl Kazachok was sentenced to death in December for killing two of his children in January.

**Kazakhstan** continued to observe the official moratorium on executions in place since 2003. A court in November 2016 sentenced to death Ruslan Kulekbayev, charged with terrorism-related offences after the killing of 10 people in July.

In **Russia**, throughout the year, some politicians expressed support for the death penalty; in March they submitted a bill to the Duma (lower house of the parliament) to reinstate the death penalty for terrorism-related crimes. The government and the Supreme Court expressed their opposition to the bill in the same month.