

The campaign to free Bogdan Syrotiuk launches a new website

Our reporters
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The *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Committee of the Fourth International have launched a new website for the campaign to free Bogdan Syrotiuk at the address FreeBogdan.org. The platform brings together the petition, the letters of protest to the Ukrainian courts, the statements of support from around the world and the means for every reader to carry forward the fight to free Bogdan.

On August 10, a court in Pervomaisk sentenced Bogdan, a 27-year-old socialist and leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), to 15 years in prison on charges of “high treason” under martial law. The entire case against him consisted of six articles in which he called on Ukrainian and Russian workers to unite against the war and against the governments waging it. He has already spent more than two years in detention, for much of that time denied urgently needed medical treatment. His appeal against the sentence must be filed by September 9.

The response since the verdict

The sentencing has produced an outpouring of support for Bogdan. More than 7,500 people in over 90 countries have now signed the petition, more than 1,500 of them since the verdict alone. Dozens of letters of protest have been sent to the courts from more than 30 countries.

Historians, jurists, workers and students have written, among them John-Paul Himka, professor emeritus of history at the University of Alberta, who asked the court: “How can one continue to defend Ukraine as a democracy when someone is sentenced to fifteen years

imprisonment for expressing opinions that in no way jeopardize Ukrainian security?”

Hundreds of statements of support have been posted on social media since the verdict. The new site is built to gather this response in one place and to broaden it.

What the site does

Visitors can sign the petition directly on the front page and choose whether their name appears publicly on the signatures page. Signers are encouraged to add a statement in their own words, and the statements from workers, students and professionals explaining why they signed are among the most powerful material the campaign has.

Dozens of letters of protest have already been published on the WSWs. The site now houses those that supporters wish to make public, so that the breadth of the opposition can be seen in one place. Thirty-one are posted there so far, most of them written since the verdict.

The site also collects the most important statements of support from social media, going back to Bogdan’s arrest. It carries the campaign’s news, the statements of the WSWs and the ICFI, and a printable sheet with a QR code that supporters can post in workplaces, on campuses and in their neighborhoods.

Writing to the court

The most significant addition to the new site is the tool for writing to the court. A visitor who opens the letter-writing page is given three starting drafts, picks one, edits it in their own words and signs it with their own name. With one click the site adds a Ukrainian translation to enable the writer to send their letter in both languages. It is addressed to the Pervomaisk City District Court, copied to the Mykolaiv Court of Appeal and copied to the WSWS so that it can be published alongside the others. The visitor can then send it from their own email client.

The translation answers a specific maneuver. As David North explained in the WSWS Perspective of September 3, the Mykolaiv Court of Appeal has responded to the flood of protest letters by declaring that correspondence must be in Ukrainian, “the language provided for by court office work.” The WSWS rejects the chauvinism of this demand, which is aimed at the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine itself as much as at supporters abroad. But the answer to the court’s maneuver is not to write less. It is to write more, and in both languages, which this tool facilitates.

The campaign needs your support

Deepening the fight to free Bogdan requires resources. The legal defense of Bogdan, the international mobilization on his behalf, the building of the site and the translation of the campaign’s material into the languages of the workers who must be reached all entail substantial costs. The WSWS accepts no funding from corporations, governments or foundations. Everything the campaign does is paid for by its readers and supporters. Every donation, whatever its size, goes directly to the fight to free Bogdan.

The next stage

The platform launched this week is a step forward in the fight to free Bogdan. It is currently in English, and

other language editions are being prepared. Other features will be added as the campaign develops. FreeBogdan.org will be at the center of the political offensive to free Bogdan.

The days before September 9 are decisive. The WSWS urges every reader to go to FreeBogdan.org and act:

- Sign the petition, and add a statement of support in your own words.

- Write to the court, in your own language and in Ukrainian, using the letter-writing tool. If you have written before, send your letter again with the Ukrainian translation.

Donate to the campaign.

- Post your support on social media, and share the campaign’s posts.

- Share the site widely with your contacts, in your workplace and in your neighborhood.

Free Bogdan Syrotiuk!



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact