

Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l strongly condemns Estonian security officer's sentence to 15 years in prison

HRWF (20.08.2015) – Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l strongly condemns Mr Kohver's abduction on Estonian territory on 5 September 2014, illegal detention in Russia and lack of a fair trial. With this lengthy sentence, it is obvious that Putin deliberately wants to stoke tensions with the Baltic States and the European Union, to flex his muscles on the international scene and to display his power to a powerless EU.

Willy Fautré, director of HRWF Int'l urges Russia to release Mr Kohver. "The OSCE, the Council of Europe and the international community must hold Russia to account for violating international law. Mr Kohver has been deprived of the right to a fair trial: There was no public hearing of the case, the Estonian consul was not allowed to be present at the hearings and Mr. Kohver was deprived of adequate legal aid."

Russia sentences snatched Estonian security officer to 15 years

RFE/RL (19.08.2015) - <http://www.rferl.org/content/estonia-russia-kohver-spying-/27196880.html> - Russian court has convicted of espionage an Estonian security officer who Tallinn and Brussels say was abducted in Estonia a year ago and dragged across the border into Russia, drawing sharp rebukes from Estonia and the European Union.

The court in Russia's northwest Pskov region, which borders Estonia, sentenced Eston Kohver on August 19 to 15 years in prison on charges of spying, smuggling, possession of weapons, and illegal crossing of the state border. He was also fined 100,000 rubles (\$1,523).

The court ruled that Kohver must serve his sentence at a strict security penitentiary in Russia.

The U.S. State Department called on Russia to immediately release Kohver, saying his "abduction, detention, and now conviction on baseless charges demonstrate a flagrant disregard" by Russian officials toward the rule of law.

The European Union immediately protested the verdict and called on Moscow to release Kohver and guarantee his safe return to Estonia.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said on August 19 that Kohver's "abduction and subsequent illegal detention in Russia constitute a clear violation of international law." She also said Kohver had been deprived of the right to a fair trial because it was held behind closed doors, the Estonian consul was not allowed to be present, and "Kohver was deprived of adequate legal aid."

Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Roivas also condemned the verdict, saying in a Twitter post that Kohver's "illegal detention constitutes a grave violation of international law."

Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini on the verdict against Estonian police officer Kohver

EEAS (19.08.2015) - http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150819_01_en.htm - Today, almost one year after the abduction of Estonian police officer Eston Kohver by the Russian Security Services on Estonian territory, the Pskov Oblast's regional court

rendered a verdict against him. The conviction carries a sentence of 15 years imprisonment.

Mr Kohver's abduction and subsequent illegal detention in Russia constitute a clear violation of international law. Moreover, from the very beginning, Mr Kohver has been deprived of the right to a fair trial: there was no public hearing of the case, the Estonian consul was not allowed to be present at the hearings and Mr Kohver was deprived of adequate legal aid.

Despite repeated requests, the Russian authorities have failed to resolve the issue. The EU continues to call on the Russian Federation to act according to its international obligations, release Mr Kohver immediately and guarantee his safe return to Estonia.

Some Related News

Russia jails Estonian police officer allegedly abducted on border

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/19/russia-jails-estonian-police-officer-allegedly-abducted-border-eston-kohver>
THE GUARDIAN

Russia jails Estonian found guilty of spying

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/77823c1c-4658-11e5-b3b2-1672f710807b.html#axzz3jIzpU1F8>
Financial Times

EU slams Russian 'abduction' of Estonian officer, demands release

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/08/19/europe/estonia-russia-detention/index.html>
CNN