

## Application 4

Speech by S. Torop at the Novosibirsk Regional Court on 20.09.21

For a year now, at every trial for extending our preventive measure, we have had to hear the same question regularly asked by the judge as to whether any circumstances have changed since the first instance hearing, to which we also regularly give a negative answer.

I understand that if such a question is answered negatively, it must mean that the facts that caused the preventive measure to be imposed on us have not changed either.

There is, however, a very specific point about all of this.

In the process of imposing a preventive measure on us, neither the investigator nor the prosecutor identified any evidence designed to show directly that there was an actual illegal act committed by either of us.

Although the judge time and again repeated the phrase about the existence of sufficient and convincing evidence, what was actually said was nonsensical speculation and conjecture formulated by the investigator.

And so, when we replied that the circumstances had not changed since the trial court, it meant that for the entire period of our detention we had never heard of any real evidence that would actually be reasonable to use as a basis for extending the preventive measure imposed on us.

Nevertheless, despite the identical pattern of accusatory conjecture repeated from trial to trial, which the investigator persisted in uttering and the prosecutor incompetently and willingly confirmed the assumptions that did not correspond to reality, the court also repeatedly extended our preventive measure.

Unfortunately, due to the many details observed, the impression began to emerge that all the trials that took place started with an unambiguous decision prepared in advance and took place only formally, in order to maintain the appearance of legality, and that all the statements in our defence, both by our lawyers and by us, played absolutely no role at all.

It is as if we have to watch a kind of bizarre stage play on a regular basis.

There is serious wording on the accusation papers, which, in fact, absolutely inadequately reflects the reality.

I think you will agree with this elementary fact that when it comes to what I could have done or could not have done, I am the only one in this hall who knows the most accurate information about it.

In this regard, I can fully assert that all the accusations heard at such trials I have every reason to justly compare either to delusional fantasies based on primitive rumours, or to the results of unscrupulous, biased activities of unconscionable and dishonest specialists.

The circumstances are so absurd and peculiar that, after a year in high security imprisonment, I still don't know what I'm being held for.

Why are my friends and I serving a year's sentence, because in fact such imprisonment is nothing else?

All this long time of thorough investigation, when many hundreds of witnesses were questioned during this period, I had to read just some monstrously ridiculous accusatory fantasies, but in all this time not a single piece of evidence was presented to me that could directly show what specific actions I did unlawfully to someone's detriment?

Particularly apparent was the absurdity, related solely to the far-fetched accusation that we had committed grievous bodily harm.

During the entire investigation there was not a single witness statement that could prove that any of us had done something unlawful which could have resulted in serious harm.

Then why was I so inhumanely separated from my family, from my young children who particularly need my presence around them?

Is it because someone has just an inadequate accusatory fantasy, and in order to find any confirmation of it, imprisonment is necessary according to the norms of this state?

This is a very wild and completely unreasonable circumstance.

But I am still able to nurture hope that this new process may turn out to be more objective.