

Sentsov Enters Week Six Hunger Strike Amidst Health Concerns

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Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov will continue his hunger strike in a Russian jail despite concerns about his health from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

Sentsov, originally from the annexed Crimean peninsula, is serving a 20-year sentence on terrorism charges that human rights advocates believe to be politically motivated. He is on day 40 of an indefinite hunger strike to win the release of scores of Ukrainians jailed in Russia.

Related article: [Russian Celebrities Join Flashmob in Support of Jailed Ukrainian Filmmaker Sentsov](#)

Sentsov has lost nearly 30 pounds and is experiencing kidney and heart complications, but has only agreed to take nutrients via daily IV drips, Sentsov's lawyer Dmitry Dinze told

National Public Radio (NPR). Russia's human rights commissioner [claimed](#) last week that the filmmaker had actually gained weight during the hunger strike.

Pavel Chikov, chairperson of the human rights groups AGORA, [said in a statement on Telegram](#) that the ECHR requested detailed information on Sentsov's health from the Russian government, and noted that authorities were obligated both to keep Sentsov from dying, while also prohibited from methods like force feeding that would have amounted to torture.

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Chikov included information that the ECHR has allegedly requested that Sentsov end his hunger strike. In response, his attorney, [quoted](#) in the state-run TASS news agency on Thursday, said her client declined. "My client said no to the ECHR's statement requesting Sentsov to end his hunger strike, and passed his greetings to the ECHR."

Russia rejected the United States' call last week to release political prisoners, including Sentsov, arguing that Washington has ["no moral right"](#) to call Russia out about who it incarcerates. The Kremlin has rejected high-profile pleas to pardon Sentsov, signalling that the film director should request release himself.

"The doctors say that if serious problems begin, they will feed him – with or without his permission," Sentsov attorney Dinze told NPR.

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