

Jailed Ukrainian Filmmaker on Hunger Strike Warns 'End is Near'

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Oleg Sentsov/ Antonymon/ Wikimedia Commons

Oleg Sentsov, the jailed Ukrainian filmmaker nearing the third month of an indefinite hunger strike over his demand for Russia to release political prisoners, said in a letter to his cousin that he is barely hanging on to life.

Russian authorities sentenced Sentsov, a native of annexed Crimea, to 20 years in a prison north of the Arctic circle on charges of terrorism. Sentsov declared a hunger strike 88 days ago to demand the Russian government release scores of fellow Ukrainians he said are jailed for political reasons.

Sentsov's cousin, Natalia Kaplan, said Sentsov wrote her a "catastrophic" letter in which he writes that he "barely ever gets up."

"He wrote the end is near, and he wasn't referring to his release," Kaplan [said](#) in a Facebook post Wednesday.

The filmmaker also told Kaplan he is not receiving letters, and wonders whether the wider world is interested in the hunger strike.

Related article: [Can Oleg Sentsov's Hunger Strike Be Successful?](#)

In the months since he began his hunger strike, Sentsov has lost 30 kilograms and his heart rate slowed to 40 beats per minute, according to an earlier [update](#) from Sentsov's lawyer Dmitry Dinze.

Citing unnamed diplomats who maintain contact with officials in Moscow, Dinze said Russia does not intend to release Sentsov. The approach, said Dinze, is to "let him die as a warning to the other convicts."

Sentsov's cousin said the filmmaker rejected a request from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) to transfer him to a civilian hospital because "he simply won't survive" the journey.

"I can't imagine at all what else can be done and how to get him out of there," she wrote.

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