

Ukrainian Filmmaker Oleg Sentsov Ends 145-Day Hunger Strike

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Oleg Sentsov / AP / TASS

Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, jailed in Russia on terrorism charges, has ended his hunger strike after four months and three weeks.

Sentsov, 42, a native of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula, declared the protest on May 14 with the demand that 64 Ukrainians he considers political prisoners be released. Initially, the filmmaker serving a 20-year extremism prison sentence said he would continue his hunger strike to the "bitter end."

Hours after the Federal Prison Service made the announcement on Friday, Sentsov released a statement saying he will end his hunger strike on Saturday because Russian doctors planned to force-feed him against his will.

"In these conditions, I have to stop my hunger strike starting tomorrow, that is on Oct. 6," he wrote in a letter [published](#) by the independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper. "I'm grateful to

everyone who supported me and apologize to those whom I failed.”

Related article: [Oleg Sentsov's Hunger Strike Evokes a Dark Chapter in Soviet History \(Op-ed\)](#)

The film director said he lost 20 kilograms in 145 days.

“Sentsov has in writing agreed to eat meals,” the prison service [announced](#) in a statement earlier on Friday. “We have consulted with Moscow’s best nutritionists to develop the most optimal meal plan for him.”

The Ukrainian government’s human rights chief said the end of Sentsov’s hunger strike “means he’s in critical condition.”

“I’m deeply convinced that Russia isn’t providing suitable medical support,” Lyudmila Denisova [wrote](#) on Facebook. “If I have to, I’ll go to the [penal] colony in Labytnangi tonight.”

Sentsov was accused of setting fire to two office buildings in Crimea, including one of Russia’s ruling party, and of plotting to blow up a monument to Soviet state founder Vladimir Lenin. The film director and human rights activists have denounced the trial as politically motivated.

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