



Jill C. Pipher, PhD  
*President*

July 16, 2020

To: Igor Viktorovich Krasnov  
Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation  
15a Bol'shaya Dmitrovka Street  
Moscow, GSP-3, 125993  
Russia

Re: Case of Mikhail Lobanov  
Court unique case identification number 77RS0018-01-2020-003789-79

Dear Prosecutor General Krasnov,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the President of the American Mathematical Society, to express concern regarding the case of Dr Mikhail Lobanov, a docent in the department of mathematics and mechanics of the Moscow State University.

The American Mathematical Society, with over 30,000 individual members worldwide, is a professional organization dedicated to advancing mathematical research and education and connecting the diverse global mathematical community through our publications, meetings and conferences, MathSciNet, professional services, advocacy, and awareness programs. The AMS is committed to supporting the human rights of mathematicians around the world, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I am writing this letter following a recommendation of the AMS Committee on the Human Rights of Mathematicians.

According to multiple news reports, Professor Lobanov was arrested in front of the main Moscow State University building on March 21, 2020. He was attempting to hold a peaceful single-person picket and was holding up a cardboard sign in support of Azat Miftakhov, a mathematics PhD student at MSU held under arrest in pretrial detention in Moscow since February 2019 on a putative vandalism charge. Professor Lobanov was charged with violating a Russian federal law (Article 20.4, Section 5 of the Code of Administrative Procedures of Russian Federation) regarding political rallies and demonstrations, and released later in the evening of March 21. In June 2020 the Nikulinsky district court in Moscow convicted Lobanov of violating that federal law and fined him 10,000 roubles. It appears that the main basis for this court decision was that Professor Lobanov did not obtain a permit for holding his action.

The Russian government has recently made major investments into the country's standing as an international center of mathematical research. These commendable efforts can only succeed if the human rights of every member of the academic community, regardless of political convictions, sexual orientation or ethnic background, are fully respected and protected.

Professor Lobanov's one-person action in support of his imprisoned colleague was entirely peaceful, did not interfere with the functioning of the MSU, did not impede public order, and did not create any public health issues in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are concerned that, given these circumstances, his prosecution still went ahead. We urge the Russian law enforcement authorities (the police, the prosecutors and the courts) to exercise leniency, restraint and discretion when dealing with peaceful non-disruptive expressions of political dissent, such as that of Professor Lobanov.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JPipher', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jill C. Pipher, PhD  
President