Good news – in Belarus the 2 Kostseu boys sentenced to death (who were the subject of one of our campaigns) have been pardoned. (The date of the pardon is not clear neither was it well publicised).

4th May 2021 Report from Council of Europe :

Vladimir Vardanyan (Armenia, EPP/CD), General Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on the abolition of the death penalty, has welcomed the recent pardon of the two brothers Illia and Stanislau Kostseu, who had been on death row.

“I am very satisfied with this decision, which is only the second time in the 30 years since Belarus has been independent that a person sentenced to death was pardoned after the sentence had become final. The granting of a pardon to the Kostseu brothers reflects the Council of Europe’s standards on the protection of the right to life."

"This pardon is a step forward towards removing capital punishment from the Belarusian criminal law system, thereby improving relations between Belarus and the Council of Europe. I trust that the Belarusian authorities will show their willingness to go further in this direction, in particular by introducing a moratorium on the death penalty without delay,” he concluded.

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*Illia Kostseu, 21, and Stanislau Kostseu, 19, were sentenced to death on 10 January 2020, after the Mahilioŭ Regional Court had found them guilty of killing their former schoolteacher and setting fire to her house. On 22 May 2020, the Supreme Court upheld the death sentences. After that, the brothers appealed for clemency.*