



International
Mathematical
Union

A statement from the International Mathematical Union

The recent detainments and arrests of several members of the Russian mathematics community, on the charges of participation in a rally, has led to an outpouring of support and expressions of solidarity for those detained. The International Mathematical Union (IMU) joins those voicing their support and calls for the universal right to peaceful expression of political views to be respected. Any modern society that values science and international cooperation should listen to the scientists.

The case of Azat Miftakhov, a graduate student in mathematics who has already spent almost 2 years in pre-trial detention and who was sentenced, on a charge of hooliganism, to 6 years imprisonment in a penal colony, adds to the concerns. The IMU also calls for leniency and compassion for Azat Miftakhov as he appeals this sentence.

The IMU strongly believes that the best way to offer support to colleagues in Russia is to foster and promote international cooperation with them, especially with regard to the next International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM) that will be held in Saint Petersburg.

In response to the situation described above, some activists have now called for a boycott of the ICM in Saint Petersburg in 2022. The IMU as well as the International Science Council, of which the IMU is a member, oppose all boycotts of scientific events and all attempts to link scientific activities to political and societal issues, since boycotts are viewed to be harmful for all concerned. Specifically, the IMU rejects this call for a boycott of the ICM in Saint Petersburg in 2022 and any intimidation of the ICM organizers or prospective participants.

An ICM is a unique meeting place for mathematicians from all over the world to assemble, put political and cultural differences aside, and discuss mathematics. As such, the ICM in Saint Petersburg offers a unique opportunity to promote, stimulate, and support mathematics both within Russia and worldwide.

Berlin, 26 February 2021
The Executive Committee of the IMU