

Belarus: Joint Statement by Media Freedom Coalition on the detention of journalists

News story

The Media Freedom Coalition's Executive Group have issued a statement on the Belarus elections.



The undersigned members of the Media Freedom Coalition's Executive Group express their concern about continued attacks on media freedom surrounding the August 9 presidential election in Belarus.

Media freedom is an important part of democratic societies and essential to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We are alarmed by credible reports that the Belarusian authorities have harassed, severely beaten, detained, and revoked the accreditation of journalists and other media workers covering the election campaign and ongoing protests. This crackdown is clearly intended to specifically target journalists and deny people in Belarus and abroad the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

We are also alarmed by the continued use of internet shutdowns which limit media freedom and hinder the ability of journalists and human rights defenders to report on human rights violations. Shutdowns impact all users—while disproportionately harming women, girls, and minority groups—and can violate human rights and fundamental freedoms. This includes freedoms of opinion and expression, and association, and peaceful assembly that form the basis of a democratic society. People need access to free media to provide them with accurate information and informed analysis to hold governments to account.

We call on Belarus to guarantee media freedom, refrain from internet shutdowns, and respect international human rights law. Journalists and other media workers in Belarus must be able to do their work without fear of

detention, reprisals or restrictions (online and offline) inconsistent with the right to freedom of expression. Journalists and other media workers unjustly detained must be immediately released. Those responsible for attacks on journalists and media workers must be held to account.

Canada, Germany, Ghana, Latvia, the Maldives, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America

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