

Human rights situation in Belarus: joint statement

Thank you, Chair.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of 46 partners.

Madame Special Rapporteur,

We welcome your most recent report and have taken careful note of its recommendations. Allow me further to express our unequivocal and full support for your mandate.

More than a year has passed since the people of Belarus saw their hopes to elect a democratically elected leader of the country brutally dashed

Since then, they have bravely stood up for their human rights and fundamental freedoms in the face of well-documented, violations and abuses of their rights, repression and intimidation. There are more than 800 political prisoners, over 1,500 reported cases of human rights violations and torture – including through sexual and gender-based violence -, and the headquarters of over 200 CSOs, independent media, and opposition parties have been liquidated. We condemn the recent escalation of violations of human rights law, including reprisals against civil society and human rights defenders.

The regime made serious attacks on international law and flouted international norms. We condemn the forced landing of Ryanair Flight 4978 in Minsk for the apparent purpose of arresting a Belarusian journalist and his companion, and we also condemn its, attempt to forcibly repatriate a Belarusian Olympian from Japan to Belarus and the instrumentalisation of migrants in vulnerable situations for political purposes. Belarus state-sponsored illegal crossings at EU external border deliberately puts at risk and endangers the lives of third country nationals. We are deeply concerned by the regime's lack of cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and the total impunity of those having committed human rights violations.

We seize this opportunity to call on the Lukashenko regime to end its repressive practices, and to immediately and unconditionally release all those who have been arbitrarily detained. We further call on Belarusian authorities to stop instrumentalising migration for political purposes and other hybrid threats that put people's lives in danger, including by blocking access to humanitarian aid. The only way to end the political crisis is through an inclusive national dialogue resulting in free and fair elections under international and impartial observation. We call on the Belarusian authorities to enter into genuine dialogue with representatives of civil society, in particular the Coordination Council.

We are steadfast in our support for the people of Belarus. We will continue

to demand the immediate and unconditional release of all those arbitrarily detained in Belarus and to support international initiatives to hold all perpetrators to account, including through the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its examination and accountability mechanism on Belarus and the International Accountability Platform for Belarus.

Lastly, Madame Special Rapporteur, we stand ready to assist you in your efforts and would welcome your comments on how Member States can better support the people of Belarus and your mandate?

Thank you.

*Albania, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, Ukraine, and the European Union.