

**NO BUSINESS AS USUAL POSSIBLE WITH THE LUKASHENKO REGIME: INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY SHOULD IMMEDIATELY AND STRONGLY REACT TO A NEW MASSIVE WAVE OF  
REPRESSION AGAINST CIVIL SOCIETY IN BELARUS**

*Statement by the Civic Solidarity Platform*

15 July 2021

We, the undersigned organisations, members of the Civic Solidarity Platform, with increasing pain and anger have witnessed the assault over the past year by the de facto Belarusian authorities on democratically-minded persons, independent media, civil society organisations and professionals that defend human rights, such as lawyers. The assault has become ever more severe in recent months, and today, 14 July, reached a new low by large scale simultaneous house searches and confiscations of materials at the offices and homes of several dozen human rights workers and organisations. A number of key activists have been taken into detention.

The new massive crackdown on civil society has happened a day after Lukashenko's talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin where the Belarusian dictator called NGOs "destructive forces" which planned terror in the country and days after an interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Makey to the leading Russian propaganda media RT where he called on the security forces of Belarus to "deal" with NGOs.

Much more decisive actions by the international community against the Lukashenka regime are needed. Unprecedented crackdown requires unprecedented response. As the democratic community is discussing its options, in the last weeks the Lukashenko regime has aimed at totally destroying both the independent media and the human rights community. Given this crackdown and the growing pressure on independent lawyers, regular citizens who are also subject of repression will soon have nobody to ask for help.

The steps taken by the Belarusian regime constitute flagrant violations of international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), and of OSCE commitments. Many of the human rights defenders targeted today are regularly engaging in advocacy with international mechanisms and bodies; actions undertaken against them constitute reprisals against their legitimate human rights activities. We demand a strong and unified reaction from states that care for democracy and human rights. Diplomatic missions should step up their presence at trials of political prisoners and their attempts to visit them in prison. Existing measures such as the examination mandated by the UN Human Rights Council should be prioritized. All possibilities which the ICCPR offers to address the situation in Belarus

should be employed.<sup>1</sup> Possible steps by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court should be supported.<sup>2</sup> Universal jurisdiction options under national laws should be used for the prosecution of those engaged in systematic and severe human rights abuse. People fleeing the repression should be supported in obtaining asylum, and Belarusian diaspora organizations recognized as valuable interlocutors in building a democratic society and country.

The financial and economic basis of the regime should be undermined further by strictly applying those sanctions that have already been imposed, and by expanding the sanctions packages. Companies should not cooperate with counterparts that are state owned or only nominally independent from the state and that severely violate international labour rights standards.<sup>3</sup> Maligned influence by Russian authorities in Belarus should be countered.

Governments, parliaments, media, civil society and others in democratic states should consider various ways of expressing their solidarity with the persecuted in Belarus, including increasing support for civil society and independent media, accommodating those Belarusians who have been forced to work in exile, “adopting” political prisoners and their families, etc.

We express our strong and unwavering solidarity with our colleagues in Belarus, members of the Civic Solidarity Platform - Human Rights Centre “Viasna”, Centre for Legal Transformation “Lawtrend”, Belarusian Association of Journalists, Belarusian Helsinki Committee, Human Constanta, and all other Belarusian human rights defenders and civil society activists and NGOs affected by the repressions. We stand with you.

Those affected by the wave of repression on 14 July include<sup>4</sup>:

**Detained/detained for interrogation:**

1. Uladzimir Labkovich, lawyer at Human Rights Centre “Viasna” (detained for 72 hours)
2. Nina Labkovich, director of the Angels Band investors' association (detained for 72 hours)
3. Valiantsin Stefanovich, member of the Board of “Viasna” (detained for 72 hours)
4. Ales Bialiatski, chairperson of “Viasna” (detained for 72 hours)
5. Siargey Sys, journalist and human rights defender (detained for 72 hours)
6. Alena Laptsonak, human rights defender at “Viasna” (detained for 72 hours)
7. Andrey Paluda, human rights defender at “Viasna” (detained for 72 hours)
8. Yauhenia Babayeva, human rights defender (detained for 72 hours)
9. Aleh Matskievich, human rights defender at “Viasna” (Barysau, released after interrogation)
10. Ihar Kazmerchak, human rights defender, editor (Orsha) (released after interrogation)
11. Viktor Sazonau, human rights defender at “Viasna” (Hrodna) (detained for 72 hours)
12. Maryna Statkevich, former member of Board of “Viasna”

<sup>1</sup> Including by submitting inter-state complaints under Articles 41-43 of the ICCPR

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.civicsolidarity.org/article/1815/situation-belarus-crimes-against-humanity-deportation-and-persecution>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.equaltimes.org/the-ilo-s-condemnation-of-belarus?lang=en#.YOisfm9NczS>

<sup>4</sup> List drawn up at 13:30 CET 15 July 2021, info from <http://spring96.org/be/news/104285>, t.me/viasna96 and other local sources

13. Aliaksandr Haryton
14. Mikola Sharah (head of a free trade union cell from Polotsk, detained for 72 hours)
15. Aryna Karshunova, activist (released after interrogation by the KGB)
16. Alyaksandr Rutkevich, activist (released after interrogation by the KGB)
17. Ales Minou (released after interrogation by the KGB)
18. Eugenia Subot (released after interrogation by the KGB)
19. Artur Yusupov (Gomel, released after interrogation by the KGB)
20. Siarhei Matskevich (“Supolnasts” Centre, detained for 72 hours)

#### **Searches and seizures at:**

1. Yaraslay Ramanchuk, economist
2. Tamara Matskievich (Belarusian School Society)
3. Kiryl Kafanau (Brest, “Human Constanta” human rights NGO)
4. “Territory of Rights” space
5. Office of Centre of Legal Transformation “Lawtrend”
6. Olga Smolianko, head of the Centre of Legal Transformation “Lawtrend”
7. Office of human rights centre “Viasna”
8. Office of “Imena” journal
9. Office of the movement “For Freedom!”
10. Office of the BNF party (Belarusian National Front)
11. Office of Belarusian Association of Journalists
12. Office of Alliance of Belarusians “Batskaushchyna” (“Motherland”)
13. Office of Economic Research “BEROC”
14. Office of human rights organization “Gender Perspectives”
15. Office of European Expertise and Communication
16. Office of Belarusian Helsinki Committee
17. Office of the Centre of Informational and Legal Support of Vulnerable Groups “Advakatsya” (Polatsk)
18. Office of civil group “The Third Sector” (Hrodna)
19. Alexander Dergachev, human rights defender at “Viasna” (Smorgon)
20. Office of Leu Sapieha Foundation
21. Office of the Union of Belarusian Writers
22. Sofia Yemelyanova, chair of the board of POST Educational Centre
23. Public opinion, marketing and media research laboratory “Novak”
24. Katsiaryna Siarheeva, head of “Imena” journal
25. Katsiaryna Siniuk, founder of “Imena” journal
26. Ales Dziarhachou, human rights defender at “Viasna” (Smarhon)
27. Anatol Liabedzka, politician
28. Lera Som, poet
29. Office of the United Civic Party of Belarus
30. Volha Bialiautsova, member of the United Civic Party of Belarus (Barauliany)
31. Viktor Janukevich, deputy head of the movement “For Freedom!”
32. Natallia Riabova, director of the school of young managers in public administration “SYMPA/BIPART”

33. Vasil Leuchanka, former member of human rights center “Viasna”
34. Office of youth organisation “New Faces”
35. YularKansalt Youth Employment Assistance and Support Office

**List of CSP member organisations supporting the statement:**

1. Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Lithuania
2. Lawyer's Committee for Human Rights YUCOM, Serbia
3. Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor, Armenia
4. HR NGO "Citizens' Watch", Russia
5. Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan
6. International Partnership for Human Rights, Belgium
7. ARTICLE 19, United Kingdom
8. Human Rights House Foundation, International (head office in Norway)
9. Legal Policy Research Centre, Kazakhstan
10. Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Russia
11. Freedom Files Foundation, Poland
12. Public Association “Dignity”, Kazakhstan
13. Promo LEX Association, Moldova
14. Human Rights in Mental Health-FGIP, Netherlands/Lithuania/Bulgaria/Georgia/Sri Lanka
15. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Warsaw
16. Netherlands Helsinki Committee, Netherlands
17. Crude Accountability, USA
18. Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Norway
19. The Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House, Lithuania
20. IDP Women Association "Consent", Georgia
21. Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Kazakhstan
22. DRA, Germany
23. Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Hungary
24. Human Rights Center (HRC), Georgia
25. The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), International NGO
26. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Republic of North Macedonia
27. Human Rights Center ZMINA, Ukraine
28. Center for Participation and Development, Georgia
29. Human Rights Club, Azerbaijan
30. HRC "Memorial" (“The Human Rights Center “Memorial” is entered by the Ministry of Justice into the register provided for in paragraph 10 of Art. 13.1 of the Federal Law “On Non-Commercial Organizations”), Russia
31. KRF Public Alternative, Ukraine
32. Truth Hounds, Ukraine/Georgia
33. Swedish OSCE-network, Sweden
34. Libereco Partnership for Human Rights, Germany
35. Public Verdict Foundation, Russia
36. Institute for Reporters’ Freedom and Safety, Azerbaijan/Switzerland

**Organisations supporting the CSP statement:**

1. East European Democratic Centre, Poland
2. Stowarzyszenie Inicjatywa Wolna Białoruś, Poland
3. Board of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum, Germany
4. Standing Committee of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, Europe