



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

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STATEMENT ON THE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN BELARUS

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henrik Malvik at the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 26 January 2023

Thank you Mr. Chair,

It is saddening to see the human rights situation in Belarus continue to further deteriorate.

According to the renowned human rights organisation Viasna, more than 1400 individuals have now been jailed for their political views or activities. By continuing to suppress real, suspected, or imaginary critics of the regime, the authorities violate Belarus' OSCE commitments and international obligations. By persecuting its critics, the Lukashenko regime unfortunately seeks to stifle all dissent and intimidate the Belarusian people into silence.

The victims of the Belarusian authorities' brutal crackdown on civil liberties are many. I would like to bring your attention to some of them, without being oblivious of others.

Daria Losik, wife of imprisoned blogger and journalist Ihar Losik, was sentenced to two years in prison for giving an interview to Belsat TV. This is in direct contradiction of the freedom of expression. The four-year-old daughter of Daria and Ihar is now left with two parents in prison. Both imprisoned on dubious and politically motivated charges.

Trade union representatives Aliaksandr Yarashuk, Siarhei Antusevich and Iryna But-Husain, were recently sentenced to severe prison terms. This is a direct assault on the freedom of association, also a fundamental human right.

The ongoing trial of journalist Andrzej Poczobut is equally worrying, as it reaffirms the regime's continuous assault on free speech and press freedom. Mr. Poczobut, who is facing up to 12 years in prison, is the latest of a growing number of journalists and other media workers persecuted for carrying out their vital work.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to conclude with the same appeal to the Belarusian authorities we have stated many times before: Release all those who have been jailed on political grounds. Stop the ongoing and all future sham trials, including that of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya; Honour all international obligations Belarus has signed up to; And engage in a genuine dialogue with the democratic opposition.

Thank you.