



Human Rights Council**Fifty-eighth session**

24 February–4 April 2025

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council
on 3 April 2025****58/19. Situation of human rights in Belarus***The Human Rights Council,*

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other applicable human rights instruments,

Recalling all resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the International Labour Organization on the situation of human rights in Belarus, including Council resolution 55/27 of 4 April 2024, relevant reports and statements of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and all relevant statements made by the Office of the Secretary-General, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special procedures and mechanisms of the Human Rights Council on the deteriorating situation of human rights in Belarus,

Reaffirming its commitment to the sovereignty and independence of Belarus, and reaffirming also that it is the primary responsibility of the State to respect, protect and fulfil human rights in accordance with its obligations under international human rights law,

Expressing grave concern over the further deteriorating situation of human rights in Belarus, with reported gross, widespread and systematic violations of human rights being carried out in furtherance of government policy and coupled with continuing systematic impunity,

Deeply concerned in this respect by the incarceration of more than 1,200 political prisoners and other persons for having exercised their human rights and by the continuing practice of arbitrary detentions and arrests, including those involving incommunicado detention, of individuals on politically motivated grounds or for exercising their human rights, including members of the opposition, journalists and other media workers, environmental and human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, lawyers, medical workers, cultural workers, academics, teachers, students, children, older persons, persons belonging to national and other minorities, foreign nationals, members of independent trade unions and strike committees, members of religious groups and individuals expressing dissenting opinions, among them those peacefully expressing protest or speaking out against the war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine or the support of Belarus for that aggression, while noting the recent pardoning of more than 220 political prisoners,



Alarmed by reports of deaths of persons in detention and continuing systematic and widespread acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including sexual and gender-based violence, against individuals, including women, children, youth and persons with disabilities, detained and arrested by Belarusian authorities in inhumane conditions and deprived of timely and adequate medical services and independent legal assistance, with many subject to forced labour or arbitrary punishment, including solitary confinement and prolonged incommunicado detention, which in some cases could amount to enforced disappearance,

Deploring the continuing lack of independence and impartiality of the judiciary, the systematic denial of due process and violations of fair trial guarantees under international human rights law, including by the continued prolonged detention of persons without any opportunity to challenge the lawfulness of the detention, multiple prosecutions for the same act, the lack of information about the charges brought against them and the denial of any legal defence or of a legal defence of their own choosing, and deploring also the widespread use of trials in absentia and recourse to closed trials, disproportionately severe sentences for political prisoners and the intimidation, arbitrary arrests and detentions of, disciplinary measures against and disbarment of lawyers for providing services to those arrested and sentenced on politically motivated grounds,

Seriously concerned about ongoing oppressive restrictions on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, association and expression, both online and offline, resulting in the prosecution, harassment, intimidation, repression and forced exile of human rights defenders, civil society and independent media, including the eradication of independent associations through the large-scale ordered closure or forced self-closure of civil society organizations and all independent trade unions, the tightening of the State's control of schools and religious communities, enhanced digital surveillance, often leading to prosecutions, arbitrary decisions to cancel professional licences, the revocation of the accreditation of foreign media workers, the banning of independent media outlets, the blocking of independent media websites and Internet shutdowns, State-sponsored disinformation in Belarus, numerous raids on private houses and offices, the arbitrary seizure of assets and properties and other repression of those living abroad, and widespread crackdowns against the relatives and supporters of political prisoners and those who have left the country,

Noting with grave concern that, according to the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, building on the findings of the High Commissioner and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, some of the violations committed in Belarus may amount to crimes against humanity, specifically imprisonment and persecution on political grounds, in that they were committed intentionally as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a segment of the civilian population, with knowledge of the attack,

Reiterating serious concern at the ongoing use of legislation as part of a State-directed, widespread and systematic policy for eradicating civic space and any actual or perceived dissent, including to restrict the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, association, expression, religion or belief, both online and offline, and other human rights in violation of international human rights law, including the amendments to the Law on Mass Gatherings, the Law on Mass Media, the Law on the Bar and Legal Advocacy, the amendments to the Criminal Code, adopted in May and December 2021, May 2022 and March 2023, the Code of Administrative Offences adopted in January 2022, the amendments to the Constitution adopted in the referendum held on 27 February 2022, the amendments to the Law on Citizenship adopted in January 2023, Presidential Decree No. 269 adopted in August 2023, the Presidential Decree adopted in September 2023 on procedures for the issuance of documents and the performance of certain actions, the amendments to the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations adopted in December 2023, Presidential Decree No. 32 adopted in January 2024 and the amendments to the Law on the Investigative Committee adopted in May 2024,

Noting with deep concern the increased use of "terrorism-" and "extremism-" related legislation to intimidate, repress and prosecute organizations for expressing dissent or defending human rights and individuals for exercising their fundamental freedoms,

Deplores the continuing discrimination affecting women and girls and individuals in vulnerable situations, such as persons with disabilities and persons belonging to national or ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, and deploring also the increasing discrimination and violence against and repression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons,

Expressing profound regret that, yet again, the Belarusian authorities have not fulfilled their obligations with regard to the right of every citizen to vote and to be elected in free and fair periodic elections, carried out through transparent and inclusive processes, in accordance with the State's obligations under article 25 (b) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and noting with concern that the Belarusian authorities did not invite in due time international or regional independent election observers, including from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to monitor the conduct of the 2025 presidential elections, thus not granting access to key stages of the election process,

Expressing deep concern at the continued use of the death penalty in Belarus, especially in a context where fair trial guarantees are not upheld, and at the limited amount of relevant information with regard to its use, especially in the context of the amendments to the Criminal Code expanding the use of the death penalty, and taking into account that transparency is a requirement of fair and effective criminal justice,

Regretting the inadequate response and persistent lack of cooperation by the Belarusian authorities to the requests made by the Human Rights Council in its resolutions and the recommendations made to the State by the High Commissioner, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus and other special procedure mandate holders and the treaty bodies, as well as the measures recommended under article 33 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization calling upon Belarus to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the supervisory bodies in the context of the non-compliance of Belarus with its obligations under the conventions of the International Labour Organization, and also regretting the inadequate response to the recommendations in reports under the Moscow Mechanism of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe,

Stressing the need for accountability for human rights violations and abuses, which is critical for the prevention of further violations and abuses and for the recognition of victims, guaranteeing that they have access to justice and effective remedy, including reparation, through restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition, and expressing profound concern over the blatant lack of accountability for human rights violations in Belarus,

1. *Welcomes* the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus¹ and of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus;²

2. *Strongly condemns* the widespread and systematic violations of international human rights law, among them arbitrary deprivation of the right to life and to liberty, with mass unlawful detentions and arrests of individuals on politically motivated grounds or for exercising their human rights, enforced disappearance, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including sexual and gender-based violence, denial of due process and the right to a fair trial, failure to safeguard the rights and best interests of the child, violations of the right to education and work, arbitrary denial of the right to enter one's own country and violations of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association and to equal protection of the law, as well as other violations of human rights committed in Belarus, all as reported by the Group of Independent Experts and the Special Rapporteur;

3. *Condemns* the actions of the Belarusian authorities in committing an act of unlawful interference that deliberately endangered the safety and security of a commercial passenger aircraft and the lives of all those on board in May 2021, constituting a flagrant and

¹ A/HRC/56/65.

² A/HRC/58/68.

serious violation of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, as confirmed by the International Civil Aviation Organization;³

4. *Strongly urges* the Belarusian authorities to comply fully with all their obligations under international human rights law and:

(a) To immediately and unconditionally release and effectively rehabilitate all those persons arbitrarily or unlawfully detained, arrested, charged or sentenced on politically motivated grounds or for exercising their human rights;

(b) To cease the use of force against peaceful demonstrators, of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, prosecution, harassment, intimidation, repression and forced exile of individuals solely for exercising their human rights or for performing their duties, and to ensure equal protection of and by the law;

(c) To ensure timely and adequate medical assistance and living conditions for all detained persons, and to guarantee their access to independent legal assistance of their choice and to legal protection throughout all proceedings;

(d) To ensure prompt, effective, thorough, transparent, independent, impartial and gender- and age-responsive investigations, addressing the full chain of command relevant to individual criminal responsibility with a view to ensuring accountability and effective remedy in all cases of human rights violations and abuses, including through restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition for victims and survivors, as appropriate;

(e) To take all measures necessary to ensure the full independence and impartiality of the judiciary, free from executive control and political influence, and protection for and the independence of the legal profession, and to uphold due process and fair trial guarantees under international human rights law for all persons in order to restore and maintain the rule of law;

(f) To carry out a comprehensive review of national legislation to ensure that it is consistent with the international human rights obligations of Belarus and that it does not allow for arbitrary limitations or derogations, in contravention of international human rights law;

(g) To stop the misuse of “counter-terrorism” and “counter-extremism” policies, including by immediately abolishing the lists of extremist content and of persons and organizations allegedly engaged in extremist activity, and to ensure that all aspects of State national security practice, including when aimed at preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism, comply with international human rights law and do not serve as a basis for prosecuting civil society representatives and individuals engaged in non-violent expression and advocacy of dissident opinion;

(h) To adopt comprehensive non-discrimination legislation and policies guaranteeing the right of everyone to equality before and by the law, including equal access to inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory quality education, with the best interests of the child as a primary consideration;

(i) To revoke the decisions on the forced dissolution of civil society entities, to enter into a genuine, constructive, inclusive and transparent national dialogue with civil society and to create and maintain a safe enabling environment, both online and offline, in which civil society can operate free from arbitrary surveillance, hindrance and insecurity;

(j) To ensure an environment conducive to the functioning of genuinely independent media, both online and offline, including unhindered access to an open, interoperable, reliable and secure Internet;

(k) To implement a comprehensive reform of the electoral legal framework, aligning it with international standards, including following the recommendations made by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the

³ International Civil Aviation Organization, *Doc 10184, Assembly Resolutions in Force (as of 7 October 2022)*, Assembly resolution A41-1.

Venice Commission) and the Special Rapporteur, and to enter into a genuine and inclusive national dialogue with all elements of civil society to that end;

(l) To stop and prevent violations and abuses of economic, social and cultural rights, including by ceasing discrimination and arbitrary dismissal from employment and education and upholding academic freedoms and the free functioning of trade unions and of cultural and representative organizations of persons in vulnerable situations in this context, as well as by ceasing discrimination against speakers of the Belarusian language;

(m) To withdraw and prevent measures that undermine the enjoyment of any human rights, including those of Belarusians living abroad, such as the Presidential Decree adopted in September 2023 ordering the consulates of Belarus to stop renewing or extending passports and limiting other consular services essential for such persons to fully exercise their rights, and to cease criminal persecution, including trials in absentia and arbitrary seizure of properties of those living abroad, and crackdowns against their relatives in Belarus;

5. *Urges* the Belarusian authorities to relaunch a national dialogue on the abolition of the death penalty and, as a first step, to introduce a moratorium on its use;

6. *Calls upon* Belarus to consider re-acceding to the individual complaint procedure under the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to re-accede to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters;

7. *Decides* to extend the mandate of Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus for a further period of one year, effective from the end of its fifty-ninth session, and requests the Special Rapporteur to continue to monitor developments and to make recommendations on ways to strengthen respect for and protection and fulfilment of human rights in Belarus, to hold consultations with all stakeholders, including civil society inside and outside Belarus, and to submit a report on the situation of human rights in Belarus to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-second session and to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session, including in an easy-to-read version and in an accessible format;

8. *Also decides* to extend the mandate of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus for a further period of one year under the same terms as provided for by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 55/27;

9. *Commends* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Group of Independent Experts and the Special Rapporteur for the work and activities undertaken to date, which have been conducted in a transparent, impartial and consultative manner despite the continued lack of cooperation by the Belarusian authorities, including the lack of access to the country, and encourages the Special Rapporteur and the Group of Independent Experts to cooperate with each other with a view to promoting synergy between the two mandates;

10. *Requests* the Group of Independent Experts to give an oral update to the Human Rights Council at its sixtieth session and to present a comprehensive report at its sixty-first session, including in an easy-to-read version and in an accessible format, both to be followed by an interactive dialogue;

11. *Urges* the Belarusian authorities to establish full and non-selective engagement with all United Nations human rights mechanisms, including with the Special Rapporteur, the Group of Independent Experts, all thematic special procedures and the treaty bodies, including by granting them all free, full and unhindered access to the country, providing them with the information necessary for the fulfilment of their mandates and implementing their recommendations, to ensure meaningful cooperation with and extend full and unhindered access to the Office of the High Commissioner, to implement the recommendations accepted by the State during previous cycles of the universal periodic review and to refrain from all forms of intimidation and reprisals against persons and associations for their cooperation with those bodies and mechanisms;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the Office of the High Commissioner to provide the Special Rapporteur and the Group of Independent Experts with all necessary

assistance and adequate human, technical and financial resources to enable the swift renewal and the effective fulfilment of their mandates.

*57th meeting
3 April 2025*

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 25 to 5, with 17 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Albania, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechia, Dominican Republic, France, Gambia, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), North Macedonia, Republic of Korea, Romania, Spain, Switzerland

Against:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burundi, China, Cuba, Viet Nam

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, South Africa, Sudan, Thailand]
