

## OSCE media freedom representative calls for end to crackdown on independent media in Belarus

Русский



The OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic, opens a session on media freedom at the OSCE's Review Conference in Warsaw, Poland, 7 October 2010. (OSCE/Curtis Budden)

VIENNA, 5 January 2011 – The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic, called today for an end to the attacks on independent media in Belarus and urged authorities to immediately release imprisoned journalists.

"I am deeply concerned by the unprecedented wave of violence, intimidation, arrests and prosecution of journalists that started in the wake of the 19 December 2010 presidential election," said Mijatovic in a letter to Belarusian Foreign Minister Sergey Martynov.

Irina Khalip, a correspondent for Russia's *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper, and Natalya Radina, the editor of the charter97.org website, were arrested and charged with taking part in and organizing "mass disorder". They both face prison terms of up to 15 years.

In addition, security forces raided the offices of the *Nasha Niva* newspaper, the European Radio for Belarus, and the Belsat television station. Several journalists working for these independent media outlets had their homes searched and equipment confiscated.

Mijatovic urged Belarusian authorities to put an end to these hostile actions against independent media and release Khalip and Radina immediately.

Mijatovic notified the Belarusian government that she is ready to visit Minsk in the near future to offer her Office's assistance in ensuring that Belarus meets its OSCE media freedom commitments.

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## Press release

# OSCE media freedom representative condemns arrests and assaults on journalists following Belarus election

VIENNA, 21 December 2010 – The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic, today condemned detentions and assaults of Belarusian and international journalists in Minsk following the 19 December presidential election.

“Violence against the media is unacceptable. The police should assist reporters who cover public events - not beat or intimidate them, damage their equipment and imprison them. I call on authorities to immediately release all jailed journalists.”

Many journalists were detained or sentenced up to 15 days in prison and numerous reporters were injured and had their equipment damaged by the police in the Belarusian capital on 19 and 20 December.

“Although a record number of journalists were accredited to cover the elections, and their working conditions had been improved, brutal treatment of media representatives by law-enforcement agencies in the aftermath of the election shattered signs of progress,” said Mijatovic.

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