



Plenary sitting

B9-0389/2020

24.11.2020

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on **The continuous violations of human rights in Belarus, in particular the murder of Raman Bandarenka**
(2020/2882(RSP))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Fabio Massimo Castaldo

B9-0389/2020

European Parliament resolution on The continuous violations of human rights in Belarus, in particular the murder of Raman Bandarenka (2020/2882(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions and recommendations on Belarus,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to all human rights conventions to which Belarus is a party,
 - having regard to the Council Conclusions on Belarus of 12 October 2020,
 - having regard to the 6th round of the bilateral Human Rights Dialogue between the EU and Belarus on 18 June 2019 in Brussels,
 - having regard to the Statement by the EEAS Spokesperson on the death of Raman Bandarenka of 13 November 2020,
 - having regard to the Joint Statement by the EU Delegation to Belarus on behalf of the EU Member States represented in Minsk, the British Embassy, the Embassy of Switzerland, and the Embassy of the United States of America on the deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus of 17 November 2020,
 - having regard to previous Statements by the EEAS Spokesperson on developments in Belarus and on the application of the death penalty in Belarus,
 - having regard to the OSCE Rapporteur’s Report under the Moscow Mechanism on Alleged Human Rights Violations related to the Presidential Elections of 9 August 2020 in Belarus of 5 November 2020,
 - having regard to the Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus of 17 July 2020,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure;
- A. whereas the 9 August presidential elections in Belarus were neither free nor fair; whereas Belarus has seen unprecedented protests calling for free and fair new elections, following the announcement of a falsified result, which led to a violent crackdown and thousands of arrests, coupled with reports of torture and ill treatment;
- B. whereas, on 12 November, Raman Bandarenka died after several hours of surgery in a hospital in Minsk due to serious injuries caused by the brutality of plain clothed men linked to Alyaksandr Lukashenka, according to investigative reports;
- C. whereas the human rights situation in Belarus continues to deteriorate, with growing numbers of arbitrary arrests; whereas human rights defenders are systematically subjected to intimidation, harassment and restrictions to fundamental freedoms;

- D. whereas the Belarusian authorities have shown an appalling disregard for the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Belarusian people as well as their lives by carrying out repression of their own population;
- E. whereas the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, finds that Belarus has effectively criminalised human rights work and that women human rights defenders are being particularly targeted;
- F. whereas there is no indication that Belarusian authorities are investigating the thousands of reports of police brutality filed since mid-August or the killings of protesters, including Raman Bandarenka; whereas the widespread impunity of human rights violations perpetuates the desperate situation of the Belarusian people; whereas the absence of the rule of law impedes their right to a fair trial;
- G. whereas Belarus is the only country in Europe to still carry out capital punishment;
1. Expresses its deepest condolences to Raman Bandarenka's family and friends and supports Belarusian human rights organisations' call to open a criminal investigation into Raman Bandarenka's death;
 2. Continues to stand firmly in solidarity with the people of Belarus, who continue to suffer at the hands of the Belarusian authorities;
 3. Strongly condemns the violence and repression employed by the Belarusian authorities against peaceful protesters, persons engaged in the pro-democracy movement, independent media, human rights defenders, representatives of civil society, students, scientists, athletes, doctors, legal practitioners, IT workers, factory workers, and other Belarusian citizens;
 4. Demands an immediate end to this violence, persecution, and unlawful detentions; insists on the immediate and unconditional release of and dropping of all charges against anyone arbitrarily detained or convicted in retaliation for exercising their civil and political rights;
 5. Welcomes the OSCE Rapporteur's Report under the Moscow Mechanism on Alleged Human Rights Violations related to the Presidential Elections of 9 August 2020, and insists on EU support to the call for an international investigative mechanism into all incidents of human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, ill treatment, gender-based violence, and torture, to end impunity of violations and hold those responsible to account;
 6. Emphasises the need for a peaceful and democratic solution to the current crisis, underpinned by independent and free media and a strong civil society, and supports the call for free and fair new elections, as well as an inclusive national dialogue;
 7. Insists on the need to ensure citizens' rights to freedom of assembly, association, expression and opinion, as well as media freedom, and thus lift all restrictions in law and practice that impede these freedoms;
 8. Reiterates the importance of establishing the rule of law in order to respect fundamental freedoms and human rights, as well as of a functioning independent judiciary, to ensure the right to an attorney, fair trial and legal recourse;

9. Condemns the crackdown on women human rights defenders, in particular the arrests of Marfa Rabkova and Marina Kostylianchenko from the Human Rights Centre Viasna, and calls for an immediate end to gender-based harassment of women activists;
10. Calls for ceasing all ill treatment, gender-based violence, and torture, for the introduction of a specific definition of torture into Belarus' Criminal Code in line with international human rights standards, as well as for legislative changes to criminalise enforced disappearance;
11. Urges Belarusian authorities to cooperate fully with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, the UN Committee against Torture and the UN Human Rights Committee, in order to protect human rights;
12. Calls on Belarusian authorities and any collaborators to stop systematic reprisals against citizens, such as arbitrary dismissals, blocking private bank accounts, internet black-outs, as well as cutting off running water and heating;
13. Emphasises the need to improve the access, availability and quality of healthcare in places of detention, in particular given the COVID-19 pandemic;
14. Strongly condemns the ongoing application of the death penalty and calls for its immediate permanent abolition and, pending this, a moratorium on capital punishment and an effective right to appeal against death penalty sentences;
15. Demands ceasing repressions against human rights defenders, opposition figures, civil society activists, election observers, environmental rights defenders, and independent journalists and bloggers, and insists on guaranteeing their ability to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions; condemns in particular Belarusian authorities' attempts to declare social media platforms, such as NEXTA, as "extremist";
16. Insists that Belarusian workers should be able to exercise their right to strike peacefully without risk of dismissal, arrest or other reprisals;
17. Is concerned by Belarus' suspension of the dialogue on human rights with the EU and plans to lower the level of participation in the Eastern Partnership programme;
18. Calls for increased EU engagement with civil society activists, human rights defenders, and independent media in Belarus and abroad, including capacity-building and financial support; asks the Commission to launch a targeted EU assistance programme to help victims of political repression and police violence;
19. Asks Member States to provide assistance to people who had to leave Belarus, for their protection and the treatment of injuries and trauma as a result of torture and ill treatment, as well as to grant asylum in cases of persecution;
20. Calls on the Commission, Member States and the EEAS to cooperate with the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, the UN Human Rights Council, as well as human rights defenders and civil society on the ground to ensure monitoring, documentation and reporting of human rights violations and subsequent accountability and justice for victims;
21. Asks the EEAS and the EU Delegation in Belarus to support human rights defenders and lawyers under attack, including by visiting them in detention and by monitoring their trials;

22. Welcomes the Council's decision to impose restrictive measures against 55 members of the Belarusian authorities, including Alyaksandr Lukashenka, as well as the agreement of EU foreign affairs ministers on 19 November 2020 to proceed with the preparations of another round of sanctions, as a response to the brutality of the authorities and in support of the democratic rights of the Belarusian people;
23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the OSCE, as well as to the President, Government and the Parliament of Belarus.