



Plenary sitting

B9-0521/2022

22.11.2022

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 continuing repression of the democratic opposition and civil society in Belarus
(2022/2956(RSP))

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on behalf of the Renew Group

B9-0521/2022

**European Parliament resolution on the continuing repression of the democratic opposition and civil society in Belarus
(2022/2956(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Belarus;
 - having regard the six EU package of sanctions;
 - having regard to the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, Anaïs Marin, to the United Nations Human Rights Council on 20 July 2022 and the call by UN experts on 10 October 2022 for immediate release of jailed Nobel Peace Prize winner and other rights defenders in Belarus;
 - having regard to the EEAS Statement of 7 October 2022 on court ruling against independent media representatives;
 - having regard to the G7 Foreign Ministers’s statement on Belarus of 4 November 2022;
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure;
- A. Whereas the Lukashenka regime in Belarus continues to enable Russia’s unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, by allowing to use Belarusian territory for attacks against Ukraine;
 - B. Whereas the Belarusians who joined the anti-war movement are targeted by repressive measures, being under administrative arrest or having criminal cases against them, including lawyer Alexander Danilevich who faces criminal charges in connection with his signature of a public petition against the war in Ukraine and three Belarusian citizens Dzianis Dzikun, Dzmitry Ravich and Aleh Malchanau who face terrorism charges for sabotaging the railway infrastructure to prevent transportation of Russian military equipment;
 - C. Whereas criminal prosecution remains the most severe form of repression, being still widespread and indiscriminate; whereas recently the Belarusian authorities introduced the mechanism allowing to prosecute and issue court decisions on criminal cases against those abroad and after such trials persons who will be found guilty might be deprived of Belarusian citizenship; whereas special in-absentia proceedings have been initiated by the Investigative Committee of Belarus against leaders of the democratic Belarusian opposition and members of the Coordination Council, notably Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Pavel Latushka, Volha Kavalkova, Maria Maroz and Siarhei Dyleuski;
 - D. Whereas there are more than 1400 political prisoners are at the moment, including the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize Ales Bialiatski, and the list include minors, persons with disabilities, pensioners and severely ill persons; whereas trials of political prisoners have continued with sentences of previously unseen scale; whereas, in October alone, 114 people were sentenced to 425 years of imprisonment;
 - E. Whereas on 17 October 2022, Mikalai Autukhovich, a businessman and activist who helped democratic opposition to raise funds back in 2020 election, received 25 years in prison and other eleven persons in his case, including people with disabilities, received up to 20 years in prison each;
 - F. whereas pressure on lawyers continues, over 50 were stripped of their licence and two remaining lawyers of political prisoners Maria Kalesnikava, Siarhei Tsikhanouski and Viktor Babaryka will be shortly deprived of their licenses;
 - G. Whereas politically motivated trials take place in closed proceedings, with no access for EU diplomats to observe;

- H. Whereas the list of alleged extremists has dramatically increased amounting to almost 1900, including opposition activists, journalists, business leaders and others who took part in anti-government demonstrations in 2020;
 - I. Whereas the persecution of independent trade unions is still on-going and their leaders and activists, including Aliaksandr Yarashuk, Henadz Fiadynich, Siarhei Antusevich, Mikhail Hromau, Iryna Bud-Husaim, Yanina Malash, Vasil Berasnieu, Zinaida Mikhniuk, Aliaksandr Mishuk, Ihar Povarau, Yauhen Hovar, Artsiom Zhernak and Daniil Cheunakou, remain in prison;
 - J. Whereas according to the Belarusian Association of Journalists, public discourse is almost completely suppressed and media are severely repressed; whereas according to the human rights centre Viasna, as of the end of October 2022, 32 media workers were being held in places of detention;
 - K. Whereas on 6 October 2022, leadership and journalists from BelaPAN independent news agency were sentenced to prison, notably Andrei Aliaksandrau who was sentenced to 14 years, his wife Iryna Zlobina to 9 years, and Iryna Leushyna and Dzmitry Navazhylau to 6 years each;
 - L. Whereas administrative persecution is one of the instruments of the Lukashenka regime to silence the opposition and any voice questioning the regime; whereas private businesses, schools and medical clinics, among other, are repressed in a way that they have to prove their loyalty to the regime,;
 - M. Whereas freedom of peaceful assembly is continuously violated, whereas since the fraudulent presidential elections of August 2020, no opposition street protest has been authorized;
 - N. whereas, according to the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, university students face arbitrary detentions, wrongful dismissals and expulsions from studies, clearly threatening their academic freedom;
 - O. Whereas torture is still used by the Lukashenka regime, political prisoners continue to report deteriorating health conditions, humiliations, inhumane and cruel treatments;
 - P. Whereas the restriction of civil and political rights is a strategy used by the Belarusian authorities to force opponents and democracy defenders to flee, in order to eradicate all political alternatives; whereas such repressions cause the brain drain resulting into a long-term trauma for the Belarusian society;
 - Q. Whereas Belarus effectively withdrew from the Aarhus Convention, which had considerable success in strengthening access rights, sustainable development and environmental democracy;
- 1. Stands firmly with the people of Belarus who continue to fight for a free, democratic and sovereign country despite a severe repression that affects all sectors of society;
 - 2. Recalls that the EU and its Member States did not recognise the results of the 2020 presidential election due to massive falsification and fabrication and do not recognise Aliaksandr Lukashenka as president of Belarus; calls for continuous support for the Belarusian democratic opposition led by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, by many Belarusians considered to be the winner of the 2020 presidential elections, in

organising free and fair elections, under international observation by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights ;

3. Welcomes the formation of the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya; Reiterates its unwavering support to the Belarusian democratic opposition and civil society and calls on them to continue to act in the interests of the Belarusian people and to elaborate a plan to bring the totalitarian country out of crisis; notes that democratic changes in Belarus will accelerate Ukraine's victory;
4. endorses the position of the Belarusian democratic opposition and civil society that Belarus should be recognised as an occupied or de facto occupied territory and joins them in calling for the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Belarus and Ukraine;
5. Strongly condemns Belarus' involvement in Russia's unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine; condemns Russia's armed forces new deployment in Belarus; condemns the belligerent and threat-based rhetoric of Belarusian officials against Ukraine; notes that Lukashenko and those associated with him are equally responsible for the war crimes in Ukraine and should be held accountable before the international tribunal and the ICC; supports the need to expedite investigation into criminal cases based on the universal jurisdiction and supports putting those suspected to be responsible on the international wanted list to ensure that they are tried in a court of law;
6. Denounces the fact that numerous Belarusians are persecuted for anti-war activity; deplores decision of the Belarusian Ministry of Internal Affairs to recognize the country's patriotic motto "Zhyve Belarus!" (Long live Belarus!) as Nazi symbol;
7. Continues to condemn a systematic repression that aims at instilling fear within the political opposition, but also in all citizens who would show their support for the peaceful demonstrations that have been taking place since 2020;
8. Urges the Belarusian authorities to cease all repression, persecutions, torture and ill-treatment against its people;
9. Continues to condemn the inhumane conditions of detention, the incessant humiliations and deteriorating health conditions of the political prisoners;
10. Reiterates importance of continuing the diplomatic isolation of Belarus, reducing the EU's and its Member States diplomatic presence in the country and continuing the isolation of Belarus in international organisations;
11. Urges the EU and its Member States to undertake the freezing and confiscation of the assets of Lukashenko, his family and the inner circle enabling the regime, and to channel these resources to support its victims and the Belarusian democratic opposition;
12. Denounces the numerous violations of the right to a fair trial; calls on the Belarusian authorities to open these trials to international organizations and EU diplomats;
13. Condemns the intensive harassment and persecution against the independent trade unions, urges to restore their legal status and to cease the classification of some of these trade unions as extremist organizations; calls upon unconditional and immediate release of trade union leaders and activists;

14. Condemns the intensive persecution against independent media; condemns the recent sentences imposed on journalists from BelaPAN independent news agency and calls for their and other unlawfully imprisoned media workers release;
15. Urges the EU and its Member States to continue to provide support to the civil society and the democratic political opposition;
16. Notes that a so-called Marshall Plan for Ukraine should be for the whole region, including Belarus and the Republic of Moldova;
17. Condemns the withdrawal from the Aarhus Convention, notably in the context of the launch of the Astravyets NP without fully implementing the stress test recommendations;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the authorities of the Republic of Belarus, and to the representatives of the Belarusian democratic opposition.