

**Question for written answer E-004161/2022
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs
and Security Policy**

Rule 138

Brando Benifei (S&D)

Subject: Serious human rights situation in Belarus, in particular for political prisoners

After the mass protests in Belarus in August 2020 and the repressions that followed at the hands of Lukashenko's regime, unjustified and politically motivated sentences were handed down to more than 1 400 prisoners.

Citizens such as political and human rights activists and peaceful protesters are being held in prisons in poor sanitary conditions, as noted by the Belarusian organisation Viasna.

Two such cases concern Natallia Nikitsina and Siarhei Hlebka. Nikitsina is a 52-year-old Belarusian who has been in detention in Minsk since 29 September 2021 and is supposed to be released in January 2023. She suffers from heart complications but does not have access to the necessary medical care. Hlebka, a 34-year-old Belarusian, has been under arrest since 2 March 2022 and has been sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment.

In view of this situation:

1. Can the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy confirm what measures he has taken or intends to take to ensure that human rights in Belarus are respected, in particular with regard to prisoners?
2. Can the VP/HR confirm what measures he has taken or intends to take to ensure that Natallia Nikitsina and Siarhei Hlebka are released as soon as possible?

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