

Belarus: UK sanctions eight members of regime, including Alexander Lukashenko

The UK has imposed landmark sanctions on Alexander Lukashenko, his son and senior figures in the Belarusian government under the UK's new human rights sanctions regime, the Foreign Secretary announced today. The sanctions have been imposed as part of a coordinated international approach with Canada, in a bid to uphold democratic values and put pressure on those responsible for repression.

Alexander Lukashenko's regime is responsible for a string of human rights violations against opposition figures, media and the people of Belarus in the wake of rigged elections. Despite numerous calls from the international community, he has refused to engage in dialogue with the opposition, choosing instead to double down on his violent repression.

The new sanctions include a travel ban and asset freeze on eight individuals from the Belarusian regime, including Alexander Lukashenko, his son Victor Lukashenko and Igor Sergeenko, Head of the Presidential Administration. Similar sanctions were imposed by Canada.

The Global Human Rights sanctions regime gives the UK the power to stop those involved in serious human rights abuses and violations from entering the country, channelling money through UK banks, or profiting from our economy. Alexander Lukashenko is the first leader to have been sanctioned under the regime, which was introduced in July.

These sanctions build on earlier steps taken by the UK to hold the Belarusian authorities to account and to help secure a peaceful end to this crisis, which reflects the will of the Belarusian people. These steps include triggering an independent investigation into the flawed elections and human rights violations that followed, under the auspices of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The UK has also doubled its financial support to human rights groups, independent media and community groups in Belarus to £1.5million over the next two years.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Today the UK and Canada have sent a clear message by imposing sanctions against Alexander Lukashenko's violent and fraudulent regime. We don't accept the results of this rigged election.

We will hold those responsible for the thuggery deployed against the Belarusian people to account and we will stand up for our values of democracy and human rights.

The sanctions have been imposed in response to the torture and mistreatment of hundreds of peaceful protestors in custody following the fraudulent Presidential elections. The Belarusian authorities have taken no action to hold those responsible to account. Many opposition figures have been arrested or forcibly deported and denied re-entry, in a clear show of Lukashenko's disdain for dialogue with the opposition and for basic human rights.

Notes to Editors:

- The UK sanctions include a travel ban and asset freeze on the following individuals:
 1. Alexander Lukashenko – President
 2. Viktor Lukashenko – son and National Security Adviser to the President of Belarus
 3. Igor Petrovich Sergeenko – Chief of Staff to the President of Belarus,
 4. Yuri Karayev (Minister of Internal Affairs, Major General of Militia),
 5. Alexander Barsukov (Deputy Minister of Ministry of Internal Affairs and Chief of Public Security Police),
 6. Yuri Nazarenko (Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and Commander of Internal Troops),
 7. Khazalbek Atabekov (Deputy Commander of Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs)
 8. Dmitry Balaba (Commander of the Special Purpose Police Unit of Minsk aka OMON).
- This is the second time the regime has been used since its introduction in July 2020. In July, the Foreign Secretary announced new sanctions on forty-nine individuals and organisations involved in some of the most notorious human rights violations and abuses in recent years including 25 Russian nationals involved in the mistreatment and death of auditor Sergei Magnitsky, 20 Saudi nationals involved in the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, two high-ranking Myanmar military generals involved in the systematic and brutal violence against the Rohingya people and two organisations involved in forced labour, torture and murder in North Korea's gulags.
- The sanctions come into force with immediate effect.