

## 'Deteriorating' human rights in Belarus amounts to 'wholesale oppression': UN expert

A crackdown on free speech is the latest worrying development amid the deteriorating, "wholesale oppression" of human rights in Belarus, an independent expert told the UN General Assembly, on Thursday.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, [Miklós Haraszti](#), referred to the "sad fate of freedom of expression", specifically pointing to legislation that ends anonymity for contributors to online media, and forcing all online platforms to register with the State.

Mr. Haraszti's, whose six-year tenure is coming to an end, said that human rights abuses that had prompted international scrutiny when he took up his role, were worsening in important areas.

"Given the impossibility of complete content control over the internet, the new regulations are bound to be exercised in an arbitrary, selective, and politicised manner, with the aim of intimidating those who would express critical views and expose abuses" he said.

"Meanwhile, remaining are all the infamous systemic violations that the Human Rights Council deplored when founding the mandate in 2012," Haraszti said, adding that "the entrenched oppressive legal system is backed-up through cyclically recurring violent mass crackdowns and frequent incarceration of political opponents on bogus criminal charges, as if reminding...new generations of the status quo."

Mr. Haraszti pointed out that Belarus remains the only country in Europe which still applies the death penalty.

Progress in Belarus, he said, is being hampered by a lack of political will, concluding with a tribute to the "courageous women and men who continue to ask for their basic human rights contained in the 70-years old [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)".