

# Human Rights Council Interactive Dialogue on Belarus: Joint Statement on Media Freedom in Belarus

Thank you,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on media freedom in Belarus on behalf of 42 states.

We reaffirm our unequivocal condemnation of the targeting, harassment and detention of journalists and media workers. We are deeply concerned by the excessive use of force by the authorities against journalists, including reports of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In a statement on 19 November, UN human rights experts strongly condemned large scale violations in Belarus, and said that peaceful protesters and journalists remain unprotected from disproportionately violent actions of security forces.

Journalists in Belarus are facing unprecedented levels of harassment. On 20 November, independent journalist Yekaterina Bakhvalova had criminal charges brought against her after filming police firing stun grenades during a memorial for murdered opposition supporter, Raman Bandarenka. A further 23 journalists were detained while covering this event. Since May, 390 journalists have reported some form of persecution. Punishing journalists for doing their job is unacceptable, and we call on Belarus to immediately release all those detained and drop all charges against them.

We strongly urge Belarus to respect the freedom of expression for all, including for journalists and media workers. We urge Belarus to implement OSCE Moscow Mechanism report recommendations on freedom of expression and the media.

The increasing restrictions on independent media actors must stop.

Thank you.

Joint Statement on media freedom in Belarus

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