

Media Freedom Coalition Statement on the Arrest of Roman Protasevich

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“The undersigned members of the Media Freedom Coalition condemn in the strongest terms Belarus’ forced diversion and landing of a commercial aircraft and subsequent arrest of journalist Roman Protasevich. □□

“This unprecedented and shocking action constitutes a full frontal attack on media freedom and has serious implications on the right of freedom of expression and opinion more broadly.

“This action is all the more troubling when seen in the context of the large-scale campaign to silence independent voices in Belarus, including the May 18 raid on the offices of independent news site tut.by and the subsequent arrest of several staff.

“Some 400 journalists and workers in the media in Belarus have faced various forms of repression in the course of the August 9 election and its aftermath.□

“The Media Freedom Coalition demands the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Protasevich as well as other journalists and media workers who have been detained in Belarus □for doing their jobs. Those responsible must be held accountable for attacks on journalists and media workers.□

“Media freedom is an important part of democratic societies and essential to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Signed:

Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States.

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Contact the FCDO Communication Team via email (monitored 24 hours a day) in the first instance, and we will respond as soon as possible.