

UK expels Belarusian diplomats in clear message to Lukashenko's regime

Press release

Two Belarusian diplomats have been expelled from the UK today in response to the unjustified expulsion of two British diplomats from Belarus earlier this week.



Belarus announced they were expelling the British representatives after their legitimate observation of protests in Minsk on Sunday. The Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary have spoken out against their unacceptable treatment, which runs counter to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Today's announcement that two Belarusian diplomats will be expelled from the UK is therefore a proportionate and appropriate response.

Belarusian Ambassador Maxim Yermalovich was summoned to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office this afternoon to be informed of the UK Government's decision. During the summons, the UK Government reiterated that the only way forward is for fresh elections to be held and for those responsible for violence against demonstrators to be held to account.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

We have sent a clear message today to Lukashenko's regime that their unjustified expulsion of British diplomats has consequences. The UK will continue to hold the Belarusian authorities to account for the rigged election in August and their ongoing use of violence to suppress the Belarusian people.

The UK has already responded robustly to the torture and mistreatment of hundreds of peaceful protestors in custody by imposing landmark sanctions on Lukashenko and senior figures in the Belarusian Government under the UK's new human rights sanctions regime.

Published 10 November 2020