

UK to increase support to civil society and independent media in Belarus

Press release

FCDO Minister Wendy Morton represented the UK at an informal meeting of the UN Security Council on the situation in Belarus.



The UK has announced it is doubling its support to independent media, human rights organisations and community groups in Belarus, with an extra £1.5m for projects over the next two years. This includes stepping up our support to a joint UK-Poland programme to promote independent media working in Belarus to counter disinformation.

We have been unequivocal in our condemnation at the attacks on media freedom by the Belarusian authorities since the fraudulent Presidential elections, including the targeting, harassment and detention of journalists and restrictions on internet access. This additional funding will help to support independent media and those defending human rights in Belarus, at a time when objective and honest reporting is most vital.

The UK's plans for extra support to Belarusian civil society were set out today (4 September) at an informal meeting of the UN Security Council which was co-sponsored by the UK. Minister Wendy Morton reiterated that the UK would continue to call out violence and harassment by the Belarusian authorities against peaceful protestors, the media and opposition leaders.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Minister Wendy Morton said:

The UK stands in solidarity with the Belarusian people, who have made clear their desire to live in a democratic and fair society. I am proud that the UK has stepped up to strengthen independent media, democracy and human rights in Belarus and we will continue to work closely with our international partners to urge the

authorities in Belarus to change their course.

The new funding announced today will help to counter gender-based violence, support human rights defenders and ensure a thriving and independent media environment, which is the bedrock of a stable, successful democracy, and a powerful tool in countering disinformation and malign narratives.

The UK's financial support to Belarus over the last year has provided assistance to independent media on business management and financial planning, supported local journalist communities, and supported work with the UN to counter domestic abuse by setting up a victims hotline for women and children.

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