

Fraudulent presidential election in Belarus: Joint statement to the OSCE

Mr Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Albania, Iceland, Moldova, Norway, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and my own country Canada, who wish to add their voices to those marking the two-year anniversary of the deeply flawed and fraudulent presidential election in Belarus. The [Moscow Mechanism report in 2020](#) and UN Special Rapporteur's investigations have found compelling evidence of a campaign of severe repression across all parts of Belarusian society which took place before, during and after the August 2020 Presidential Election.

The 2020 Moscow Mechanism report described "overwhelming evidence that the presidential elections of 9 August 2020 have been falsified and that massive and systematic human rights violations have been committed by the Belarusian security forces in response to peaceful protests and demonstrations."

The report made 65 recommendations to the Belarusian authorities, including new Presidential elections, an immediate end to the violence and release of all those illegally detained, an independent oversight mechanism on detention conditions, and an investigation into all allegations of torture.

However, two years on, civil society has been decimated and independent media quashed. Belarusian people have faced arbitrary arrest and detention – with over 1,300 political prisoners now detained, steadily growing in number since 2020. There are credible reports that some detainees have been subjected to torture. The regime has pursued politically motivated, unfair trials, has extended the use of the death penalty to include 'attempted' acts of terrorism, has prevented Belarusians from leaving the country, has undertaken trials in absentia, and failed to meet international standards when conducting a constitutional referendum.

The Belarusian authorities have had ample opportunity to end their attacks on the freedoms of their citizens, to release those detained on spurious political charges, and to undertake the fresh elections needed to enable the Belarusian people to decide their own leaders and their own future. Recommendations and evidence of wrongdoing from the UN Special Rapporteur, from the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Commission of Inquiry have been consistently ignored by the regime.

Instead, two years on from the fraudulent elections, the regime now seeks to curtail the freedoms of the people of neighbouring Ukraine through facilitating Russia's illegal invasion of their country. This support to Russia's provided by the Lukashenko regime has served as an excuse to ratchet up repression on those Belarusians standing up against the war.

We will continue to hold the Lukashenko regime to account for their human rights violations and continued support to Russia's illegal war. This includes through targeted sanctions packages and support for accountability measures. It is a false narrative that sanctions are provoking a global food crisis. It is, in fact, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine that impacts upon global food security. Firm action must be taken to deter the Lukashenko regime from their violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Belarusian people, and its reckless support of Russia's illegal invasion.

We continue to stand in solidarity with the Belarusian people, condemn the regime's continued human rights violations, and strongly urge the Belarusian authorities to release all political prisoners, immediately and unconditionally.

In conclusion, Mr Chair, we again urge decision-makers in Belarus to reconsider their current course of action, to cease their support of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, and to seek to proactively address the recommendations made in the Moscow Mechanism report.

We stand committed and ready to support the democratic rights of the Belarusian people – genuine and inclusive dialogue is the bedrock to democracy – and we invite Belarusian authorities to engage with the Belarusian people.

[Bella report published](#)

News story

Flooding and sinking of the survey workboat Bella in the approaches to Lynmouth, England.



Today, we have published our accident investigation report into the flooding and sinking of the modified small open boat Bella while carrying out hydrographic survey operations on 6 July 2021.

The report contains details of what happened, subsequent actions taken and recommendations: [read more](#).

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Regulators urge safe giving to support Pakistan flood relief

The Charity Commission and Fundraising Regulator have urged the public to 'give safely' to registered charities as people make generous donations to causes helping to support people affected by the floods in Pakistan.

This follows the launch of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Pakistan Floods Appeal. The DEC brings together 15 leading UK aid charities to raise funds quickly and efficiently at times of crisis.

The Appeal, launched by the DEC on 1 September 2022, aims to help millions across Pakistan who are in need of immediate help to survive after devastating floods hit the country.

Many registered charities are also helping to provide vital life-saving services, like water, food and healthcare, to those affected by the floods.

By supporting registered charities, including through the DEC, the public can be assured that their donations will be regulated in line with the charity law framework.

Established charities with experience of responding to disasters are usually best placed to reach people on the ground. Giving financial aid through humanitarian aid organisations, rather than sending donated goods directly to regions, is also often more practical and sustainable.

Helen Stephenson, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission said:

We've all watched in horror as the crisis has unfolded in Pakistan and we know that many people in the UK will want to help the international aid effort. We encourage everyone to follow our simple steps to check that their money gets to its intended cause. Donating to a registered charity is a good way to feel confident of that.

Gerald Oppenheim, Chief Executive of the Fundraising Regulator said:

The ongoing crisis in Pakistan is devastating. Naturally, the goodwill of the British public means many will be eager to support those affected where they can. Before donating goods or money, it is important that people carry out our recommended checks to make sure they are giving to a legitimate cause and that their donations are used for the purpose they were fundraised for.

While most fundraising is genuine, the Charity Commission and Fundraising Regulator warn that fraudsters and criminals sometimes take advantage of public generosity at times of increased giving. This includes using various methods such as fake appeal websites, email appeals that falsely use the name of genuine charities, or appeals from groups claiming to be charities.

They therefore encourage people to ensure they support genuine relief efforts by following a few simple steps before giving:

- check the charity's name and registration number on the Charity Register at gov.uk/checkcharity – most charities with an annual income of £5,000 or more must be registered.
- make sure the charity is genuine before giving any financial information.
- be careful when responding to emails or clicking on links within them.
- look out for the [Fundraising Badge](#) – the logo that says 'registered with Fundraising Regulator' – and check the Fundraising Regulator's [Directory](#) of organisations which have committed to fundraise in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice.

There are over 1900 charities on the Charity Commission's charity register that list Pakistan as an area they work in overseas.

After making these checks:

- If you think that a collection or appeal is not legitimate, report it to the police. If you think the collection is fraudulent report it to Action Fraud over the phone at 0300 123 2040 or online.
- If you think a collector does not have a licence – report it to the relevant Local Authority Licensing Team or the Metropolitan Police (if in Greater London). Also let the charity know if you can.

You can also [complain about a charity to the Charity Commission if you have concerns about its governance and the Fundraising Regulator](#) if you have concerns about its fundraising.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Press office

1. Further tips on [giving safely to registered charities](#) are available on GOV.UK
2. The [Charity Commission](#) is the independent, non-ministerial government

department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

3. The [Fundraising Regulator](#) is the independent regulator of charitable fundraising in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Further [guidance on giving safely to charity](#) is available on the Fundraising Regulator's website. It can be reached on FR@pagefield.co.uk

[Christina Blacklaws appointed as Chair of the Judicial Pension Board](#)

News story

The Lord Chancellor has approved the appointment of Christina Blacklaws as Chair of the Judicial Pension Board.



The Lord Chancellor has approved the appointment of Christina Blacklaws as Chair of the Judicial Pension Board for 3 years from 1 September 2022.

Christina is an entrepreneurial solicitor who established a virtual law firm and the first UK ABS with the Cooperative Group. Christina acts as a non-executive director for law firms and tech companies, provides strategic advice on transformational change, innovation and diversity and inclusion, sits on the QC Selection Panel and chairs the MoJ's Lawtech UK Panel.

The Judicial Pension Board (JPB) is responsible for helping the Lord Chancellor to manage and govern the Judicial Pension Schemes.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments regulates the appointment of the JPB Chair and the recruitment process must comply with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

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New houseblock to boost prisoner employment prospects

- construction begins on new 200-place houseblock and workshop at HMP Stocken
- innovative partnership with DHL to boost inmates' skills and employment prospects
- more than 100 jobs for local people and ex-offenders during construction

Work has begun on a new 214-place houseblock at HMP Stocken (category C, Rutland) creating more than 100 new local jobs – with at least 10 roles earmarked for ex-offenders with constructors Wates.

As part of a drive to skill-up offenders to equip them for a life free from crime, the block includes an innovative partnership with shipping and logistics company DHL which will run courses at a purpose-built workshop. Prisoners will earn qualifications in the logistics industry, helping them find work upon release – boosting efforts to reduce reoffending and keep the public safe.

The new houseblock will also include new prisoner classrooms and fitness facilities for offenders to aid rehabilitation.

Prisons Minister, Stuart Andrew, said:

This government is delivering on its promise to create 20,000 new prison places, complete with the workshops and facilities that will help to steer offenders towards the straight and narrow.

This not only transforms the lives of the prisoners who will be set on a better path, it will protect us all by driving down reoffending and cutting crime.

HMP Stocken Prison Governor Russ Truman said:

This development will boost the prospects of prisoners by giving them even more opportunities to earn the skills and qualifications they need to find work on release.

The Prison Service's longstanding partnership with DHL sees them employ around 500 prisoners to pack more than 66,000 orders a week of food and toiletries purchased by offenders in jail.

Construction of the houseblock is expected to be completed at the end of

2023, with the first prisoners arriving in early 2024.

Andrew Riggs, Head of Government Sector, Wates, said:

I'm delighted construction can begin on this positive project at HMP Stocken.

We have been working closely with the MOJ for almost two decades to support the expansion of its estate and look forward to drawing on our in-house expertise to deliver these new prison places and create first-class facilities to help rehabilitate offenders.

The development is part of a programme to create more than 4,000 new places across England and Wales by expanding existing jails, with construction already underway at HMP High Down and two houseblocks earmarked for HMP Guys Marsh.

This is a key element of the government's overall £4 billion investment to build 20,000 modern and innovative prison places, ensuring the right conditions are in place to truly rehabilitate prisoners. This will give prisoners the education, skills and addiction support they need to live crime-free lives on release, helping to cut crime and protect the public.

Notes to editors

- The new houseblock will increase HMP Stocken's capacity by 214 places with 188 single cells, 12 double cells and two accessible cells.
- In its recent [Prisons White Paper](#), the Ministry of Justice pledged to commence a large-scale recruitment campaign for up to 5,000 additional prison officers in public and private prisons by the mid-2020s. The full list of sites due to receive additional houseblocks are HMPs Bullingdon, Channings Wood, Elmley, Highpoint, Hindley, Wayland, Guys Marsh, High Down (in the form of a workshop) and Stocken.