



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON
THE SITUATION IN BELARUS

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 11 March 2021

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Madame Chair,

In a week when the world has marked the International Women's Day, we note that Belarus is blessed with brave women, willing to stand up for what is right. In a country where democratic rights have long been overlooked, it was women who last year led the struggle for democracy in Belarus.

Of the three opposition leaders we all go to know during last year's presidential campaign, Veronika Tsepkalo is in Latvia, helping other Belarusians who have had to leave their country. Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya is actively working on promoting the cause of democracy and human rights among Belarus true friends. And Maryia Kalesnikava, the only one of them left in Belarus, is in jail, charged with plotting a coup. They should all have been free and engaged in Belarusian society, not exiled or behind bars.

Here in the Permanent Council, the demand for respect for human rights and a stop in persecution of human rights activists and representatives of the media, have been repeated time and time again since the fraudulent presidential elections last year. We see no substantial change from the authorities in Minsk. Those responsible for violence against peaceful demonstrators and torture of detained have not been held to account.

We yet again urge the Belarusian authorities to start cooperating with representatives of the broader society to find a way to re-establish peace and introduce democracy in the country.

Thank you

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