

United States Mission to the OSCE



On Recent Developments in Belarus

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 25, 2021

I look forward to the day when we will no longer need to raise pressing human rights challenges in Belarus in this chamber, but today is not that day. Today is actually “Freedom Day” in Belarus, a day Belarusians bravely call for reforms and democracy in their country, as they have for decades. We echo those calls.

And we urge the Lukashenka regime to heed the people of Belarus and to accept the many offers from the current and former OSCE Chairs-in-Office to facilitate an inclusive national dialogue with the *Coordination Council* and civil society to find a better way forward for all Belarusians.

It is appalling that today, on Freedom Day, nearly 300 political prisoners remain behind bars in Belarus. It is inexcusable that Belarusians are subjected to harassment and often severe abuses, including torture, for peacefully exercising their human rights. We reiterate our call for the immediate release of all political prisoners in Belarus and an end to the repression of peaceful demonstrators.

We urge Belarus to implement the recommendations in the expert report of OSCE’s *Moscow Mechanism* rapporteur, which provides a roadmap for much needed reforms. We also welcome the UN Human Rights Council’s resolution on Belarus which expands the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) to collect and evaluate information on human rights abuses, identify those responsible, and provide recommendations on accountability to the international community.

The United States is also proud to support the *International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB)*. Impunity for human rights abuses in Belarus will not be tolerated. Our support of the IAPB will enable the UN OHCHR to draw upon the resources it needs to hold those responsible for abuses to account.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

###