



**United Nations Human Rights Council
45th Regular Session, 14 September to 6 October
2020**



**Oral Statement delivered by the International Commission of Jurists
in the Urgent Debate on Belarus**

ICJ and IBAHRI call on Belarus to comply with its international human rights obligations

18 September 2020

Madame President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) are concerned at the continuing human rights violations in Belarus following the Presidential election. Widespread arbitrary arrests, police violence against peaceful protesters, torture and other ill-treatment of detainees and allegations of enforced disappearances, violate Belarus's international law obligations, and require accountability.

Our organizations are particularly concerned about reports that these violations are accompanied by widespread denial of detainees' access to a lawyer. Lawyers face harassment and obstacles in carrying out their professional duties.

We highlight the recent arrests and detention of two prominent lawyers, Ilya Salei and Maxim Znak, on politically motivated charges on 9 September 2020. According to official information, the lawyers are charged with the crime of "calls for actions aimed at causing harm to the national security of the Republic of Belarus".

We urge the Council to call on Belarus:

- to comply with its international human rights obligations, including by: releasing those arbitrarily detained and ceasing abusive prosecutions against them;
- to provide detainees with confidential access to lawyers of their choice; and
- to end all harassment of lawyers and ensuring accountability and reparations for those whose human rights have been violated; and
- to request OHCHR to monitor and report to the Human Rights Council on the human rights situations in Belarus.

Thank you!