



61st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council
Item 4: Interactive dialogue with Group of Independent Experts on Belarus
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Joint Oral Statement

The **International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute** (IBAHRI) and the **International Commission of Jurists** condemn the ongoing repression of civil society in Belarus, in particular systematic attacks and judicial harassment against lawyers representing dissenting voices and defending human rights and the rule of law.

We deplore the subordination of the judiciary to executive control, as well as the arbitrary interference by the Ministry of Justice in lawyers' licensing and disciplinary proceedings, compounded by the Bar Association's failure to protect its members. Effective remedies for impacted lawyers are not available. Since 2020, almost 600 lawyers were forced to leave the profession; many of whom are now in exile.

We further condemn the recent KGB designation of the Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers as an "extremist formation". The Association, founded by exiled lawyers, works to promote human rights and the rule of law in Belarus.

We denounce the systematic repression of Belarusians residing abroad, including trials in absentia against exiled activists and the denial of access to essential consular services, exposing them to a risk of statelessness.

We urge Belarus to immediately release all those arbitrarily detained, including lawyers, to cease further persecution, and to ensure accountability. We call on this Council to adopt a strong resolution renewing the complementary mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the Group of Independent Experts on Belarus.

This statement was delivered by:
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