



57th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council
Item 4: Interactive dialogue with the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus
20 September 2024

Joint Oral Statement

The International Bar Association, the Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers; the International Commission of Jurists, The Law Society of England and Wales; Lawyers for Lawyers; Lawyers Rights Watch Canada, welcome and thank the Group of Independent Experts and support their findings.

We continue to condemn the repression of civil society in Belarus, in particular the reprisals against lawyers representing political opposition and protesters or defending the rule of law. The independence of the Bar is seriously undermined by the State's control over the legal profession when the Ministry of Justice interferes in their licensing and activities and the Bar Association fails to protect its members.

We condemn the landmark case of lawyer Maksim Znak, arbitrarily detained since 2020 and still held incommunicado, as well as the arbitrary conviction of lawyers Aliksand Danilevich, Vitali Braginiec, Anastasiya Lazarenka, Yuliya Yurhilevich and Aliaksei Barodka.

We condemn systematic use of torture, and we are deeply concerned at the abolishment of the prohibition for security forces to indiscriminately use arms against crowds. We recall that Belarus has ratified and is therefore bound by, inter alia, the UN Convention against Torture and the ICCPR.

We urge Belarus to immediately release all individuals arbitrarily detained for political reasons, including lawyers, and cease further persecution.

This statement was delivered by:
Francesca Restifo
Senior Human Rights Lawyer and UN Representative
International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)
For further information please contact: francesca.restifo@int-bar.org