



53rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Item 4: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Belarus 5 July 2023

Joint Oral Statement

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) deplore the widespread and systematic human rights violations in Belarus. We condemn the incessant attacks on independent lawyers and the failure to provide for judicial independence and fair trial guarantees.

The number of independent lawyers considerably decreased because of prosecution and harassment. Since 2020, more than 100 lawyers have been disbarred, arbitrarily detained, or forced to flee. On 10 April, a renowned lawyer, Alexander Danilevich, was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment on spurious charges; on 29 May, the Qualification Commission disbarred lawyers Kozikov, Semyanov, Ulasevich and Yakusheva in unfair proceedings.

This forms part of a larger pattern of retaliation against lawyers for representing political opposition and protesters and speaking out about the rule of law.

We are concerned at incommunicado detention of political prisoners, including Maria Kalesnikava and Viktor Babaryka, who was hospitalized in April. Their whereabouts are unknown, and lawyers are not allowed to meet them.

We condemn the Law on Citizenship amendments, revoking the nationality of citizens abroad convicted by Belarusian courts of "participation in an extremist organization" or "grave harm to the interests of Belarus."

We recall that OHCHR found that Belarusian persons were likely responsible for gross human rights violations, amounting to crimes under international law, and we urge this Council to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.

This statement was delivered by:

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