



**Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada**  
NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

**Human Rights  
Institute**



**The Law Society  
of England and Wales**

#### 58<sup>th</sup> 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 19 March 2025

#### Joint Oral Statement

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, the Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers, the Law Society of England and Wales; Lawyers for Lawyers; Lawyers Rights Watch Canada, thank the Group of Independent Experts for their excellent work and are alarmed at their findings.

We keep condemning repression of civil society in Belarus, in particular the reprisals against defence lawyers representing political opposition or defending the rule of law.

We deplore the State's full control over the judiciary, and condemn the repression against independent lawyers representing dissenting voices, the nearly complete takeover of the legal profession by the executive branch, the interference of the Ministry of Justice in the licensing activities and the Bar Association failing to protect its members.

We keep condemning the landmark case of lawyer Maksim Znak, arbitrarily detained since 2020, still held incommunicado, as well as the arbitrary conviction of lawyers Danilevich, Braginiec, Lazarenka, Yurhilevich and Barodka. 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.

Lastly, we welcome the referral of the situation in Belarus to the International Criminal Court by Lithuania, and urge other States to join it.

*This statement was delivered by:*

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