

**Statement  
on UN Human Rights Council seat application  
from the Belarusian government**

**Minsk, May 11, 2007**

The government of Belarus put forward its candidacy for a seat to United Nations Human Rights Council for 2007 election to be held on May 17.

Belarusian democratic forces as well as democratic NGOs are strongly opposed to the idea of the Belarusian government having a seat in this United Nations body that aims at promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Belarus has political prisoners – leader of the Belarusian Socialist Democratic Party and former presidential candidate, Aliaksandr Kazulin, political leaders and civil activists Mikola Statkevich, Paval Seviarynets, Zmitser Dashkevich, Andrei Klimau, Artur Finkevich, Mikola Autukhovich, Katsiaryna Sadouskaya are currently in jail. As a former presidential candidate, I was imprisoned for obvious political reasons as well.

The government of Belarus is persistently failing to meet minimum international standards of human rights protection, thus violating its own international and domestic engagements enshrined in United Nations, OSCE instruments as well as in the Constitution of Belarus. For the last decade, the government of Belarus has been regularly condemned for its bad and ever worsening record of human right respect both by United Nations and regional bodies. This deplorable record is built, *inter alia*, on harassment and closure of civil society organizations, harassment and prosecution of human rights defenders, detention and arrests of journalists and political activists, as well as the fact that none of the last decade elections were either free or fair.

In 2006, the situation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in Belarus has steadily deteriorated what has been reflected in the Report of the HRC Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus by Mr Adrian Severin (A/HRC/4/16, 15 January 2007).

This proves that the government of Belarus is unable to uphold the highest standards of human rights and fully cooperate with the Human Rights Council. It is evident that today its membership in the Council will, domestically, only serve official propaganda purposes and entail a further worsening of the situation of human rights structures and human rights activists within the country. Internationally, the Belarusian government will use its HRC membership as a shield from criticism what will undeniably affect the credibility of this newly created UN body to achieve its ultimate goals.

We appeal to all the United Nations member-states **not to support** the Belarusian government candidacy. At the same time, since the human rights situation in Belarus requires particular attention from the Human Rights Council and other UN bodies we call to extend the mandate of the HRC Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus not only in time, but also in scope and means.

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