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Statement of Ireland

57th session of the Human Rights Council

Item 4: Interactive Dialogue with the Group of Independent Experts on Belarus

20 September 2024

Ireland aligns with the EU statement and thanks the Group of Independent Experts for its inaugural update.

Four years on from the fraudulent presidential elections of August 2020, the human rights situation in Belarus remains grave. In that same period, we have seen the systematic destruction of civic space through policies implemented with the clear intention of repressing civil society organisations, human rights defenders and those who seek to exercise their freedom of opinion and expression. Ireland condemns the misuse of anti-terrorism and anti-extremist legislation to target members of these groups.

Whilst we take note of recent, limited progress on the release of political prisoners, over 1,300 political prisoners remain incarcerated, often in dire circumstances, where they can be subjected to torture, ill-treatment and deprivation of medical treatment. Ireland condemns the rampant violations of fair trial guarantees and of due process under international human rights law, to which these individuals are subjected. We call on Belarus to demonstrate a genuine willingness for progress on this issue by immediately releasing all political prisoners, without conditions.

Independent Experts,

How can we support efforts to rehabilitate recently released political prisoners, who have suffered deplorable conditions in custody?