

URGENT APPEAL – THE OBSERVATORY

BLR 007 / 0811 / OBS 104
Arbitrary arrest / Incomunicado detention
Belarus
August 4, 2011

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your intervention in the following situation in **Belarus**.

Description of the situation:

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources of the arbitrary arrest of Mr. **Ales Bialatski**, President of the Human Rights Centre (HRC) "Viasna" and Vice-President of FIDH.

According to the information received, on August 4, 2011, at around 2 p.m., a group of people in plain clothes surrounded the office of the HRC "Viasna" in Minsk. Members of the HRC "Viasna" went out of the office and locked the door. They heard one of the plain-clothes individual report saying through his phone that "*Bialtski [was] not [t]here*".

Subsequently, at about 4.30 pm, Mr. Bialatski was arrested in the street in the city centre of Minsk by the police representative of the Department of Financial Investigations.

As of issuing this Urgent Appeal, the whereabouts of Mr. Bialatski are unknown, and he is reportedly forbidden to use his mobile phone.

The Observatory expresses its deepest concern about the arrest and unknown location of Mr. Bialatski, and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

Actions requested:

The Observatory urges the authorities of Belarus to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Ales Bialatski as well as of all human rights defenders in Belarus;
- ii. Disclose the whereabouts and release Mr. Ales Bialatski immediately and unconditionally since his detention is arbitrary as it seems to merely sanction his human rights activities;
- iii. Put an end to all forms of harassment against him, and more generally against all human rights defenders in the country;
- iv. Comply with all the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, in particular with:
 - its Article 1, which provides that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels",
 - its Article 12.2, which states that "the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration";

v. More generally, ensure in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Belarus.

Addresses:

- President Alexander Lukashenko, ul .Karla Marksa, 38, 220016 Minsk, Belarus, Fax: + 375 172 26 06 10 or + 375 172 22 38 72, Email: infogrp@president.gov.by
- Head of the Administration of the President of Belarus, Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Makei, Ul. K. Marksa 34, 220016 Minsk, Fax: + 375 17 226-06-10
- General Prosecutor, Grigory Alekseevich Vasilevich, Internatsionalnaya str. 22, 220050 Minsk, Belarus, Fax: + 375 17 226 42 52
- Minister of Justice of Belarus, Mr. Viktor Grigorevich Golovanov, Ul. Kollektornaya, 10, 220004 Minsk, Belarus, Email kanc@minjust.by
- President of the Supreme Court of Belarus, Mr. Valentin Olegovich Sukalo, Ul. Lenina, 28, 220030 Minsk, Belarus, Email: scjustrb@pmrb.gov.by
- Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations in Geneva, 15 avenue de la paix, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, Fax: +41 22 748 24 51. Email: mission.belarus@ties.itu.int
- Embassy of Belarus in Brussels, 192 avenue Molière, 100 Ixelles, Belgium, Fax : + 32 2.340.02.87, Email : embbel@skynet.be

Please also write to the diplomatic mission or embassy of Belarus in your respective country.

Paris-Geneva, August 4, 2011

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

- E-mail: Appeals@fidh-omct.org
- Tel and fax FIDH + 33 (0) 1 43 55 25 18 / +33 1 43 55 18 80
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