

Belarus: Human Rights Council: Interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in Belarus in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election and in its aftermath

Statement, 4 December 2020

Thank you, Madam President.

We welcome the High Commissioner's oral update and recommendations.

The deliberate policy of repression and torture put in place in Belarus right after the elections continues to date. 30,000 protesters have been arrested and more than 1,200 criminal cases have been initiated since the beginning of the protests.

The use of excessive force and torture to deter, punish and intimidate protesters, paired with politically motivated persecution of thousands of individuals, including human rights defenders, has created an atmosphere of fear and terror.

Since August, our local partner Viasna alone has documented over 1000 cases of torture. All the documentation available points to the fact that torture of peaceful citizens has been intentional, systematic and widespread.

Impunity is a State policy in Belarus as no credible investigation has been conducted in relation to any of the allegations of torture. While victims face reprisals, those responsible for torturing them receive public recognition.

We call on the Members of this Council to recognize that torture has been committed as part of a systematic and widespread attack and that these acts may amount to crimes against humanity; to call for the establishment of an independent international investigation and; to support accountability of those responsible, including through the use of universal jurisdiction.

The call for accountability has to concern the full chain of command, including those who accepted and implemented such a policy.

I thank you.