



Belarus Embassy to Belgium
His Excellency Ambassador
Aleksandr Mikhenevich
Molièrelaan 192
B-1050 Elsene

Brussels, 1 March 2021

Your Excellency,

During the past months, the United Protestant Church in Belgium has followed the developments in your country with growing anxiety and concern.

Peaceful mass demonstrations for democracy and freedom have been broken up and brutality by security forces was not shunned. Many people have been arrested and were, and are, held on very dubious charges. Human rights defenders and journalist are persecuted as they operate in their line of duty.

In the early stages of the protests, a statement by the United Nations Human Rights Office cited more than 450 documented cases of torture and ill-treatment of detainees, as well as reports of sexual abuse and rape. At the end of 2020, the Viasna Human Rights Centre documented 1,000 testimonies of torture victims.

In addition, reports from sister churches in Belarus refer to a serious crackdown on religious leaders and church members.

We consider all these developments as very worrystic.

The imprisonment of political prisoners and the persecution of political dissidents are serious violations of human rights. Belarus is a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and for that reason, is obliged to adhere to human rights.

We would like to remind you of these international obligations of your country and call on you to ensure that the rights to freedom of expression and assembly are guaranteed for all people in Belarus.

Therefore, we would like to urge your government to end the violence, release all political detainees and begin a peaceful dialogue with the representatives of the peaceful demonstrators.

Sincerely yours,

Steven H. Fuite
President