



The Law Society
of England and Wales



Human Rights
Institute

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3 June 2024

Item 4: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus

Joint Oral Statement

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), The Law Society of England and Wales, and Lawyers for Lawyers, first of all, wish to thank the Special Rapporteur on Belarus for her great work and commitment over the past 6 years.

We keep condemning the retaliation against lawyers for representing political opposition and protesters and upholding the rule of law in Belarus.

Since August 2020, at least 140 lawyers have been deprived of their right to practice and 42 lawyers faced arbitrary detention simply for performing their professional duties

On 17 June, lawyer Leanid Sudalenka was sentenced in absentia to 5 years. Sudalenka is a prominent human rights lawyer and a campaigner for the abolition of the death penalty in Belarus.

We keep denouncing the case of lawyer Maksim Znak, arbitrarily detained since January 2022, held incommunicado, denied access to his family, lawyer, and to independent medical personnel.

We recall that Belarus has ratified and is therefore bound by, inter alia, the UN Convention against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We urge Belarus to immediately release all individuals arbitrarily detained, including lawyers, cease their further persecution, and ensure that those detained have access to an independent lawyer, healthcare professionals and family.

We lastly call upon this council to fully support the newly established **Group of Independent Experts on Human Rights in Belarus**.

This statement was delivered by:

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