

**FPS Chancellery of the Belgian Prime Minister
Rue Ducale 4
1000 Brussels
Belgium**

Subject: EFJ affiliates letter to European Heads of State and Government about the situation in Belarus

25 March 2021

We, the leaders of journalists' unions and associations in Europe, write to you to express our deep concern about the intensification of repression in Belarus. We send you this appeal on this 25 March, which is Freedom Day in Belarus, when the opposition annually gathers in large numbers to honour the proclamation of the Belarusian People's Republic in 1918.

Today, there are over 250 political prisoners in the country, including 12 journalists. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Since the fraudulent presidential elections of 9 August 2020, more than 30,000 people (including 480 journalists) have been detained, with many of them subjected to torture and ill-treatment, and over 1,000 people targeted by criminal prosecution.

We urge your government:

- to demand from the Belarusian authorities the immediate release of the 12 imprisoned journalists, the withdrawal of administrative and criminal proceedings against Belarusian journalists, and the reopening of the Minsk press club;
- to appeal to the United Nations, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Union, so that the international community intensifies pressure and takes action in the face of constant violations of human rights and press freedom in Belarus.

Yours sincerely,

Mogens Blicher Bjerregård, President of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

Andrei Bastunets, President of the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ), Belarus

Eike-Clemens Kullmann, President of the Journalistengewerkschaft in der GPA-djp (GPA-djp), Austria

Mushfig Alasgarli, Chairman of the Journalist's Trade Union of Azerbaijan (JUHI), Azerbaijan

Martine Simonis, General Secretary of the Association des Journalistes Professionnels (AJP) and National Secretary of the Association Générale des Journalistes Professionnels de Belgique (AGJPB), Belgium

Pol Deltour, National Secretary of the Belgische / Vlaamse Vereniging van Journalisten (VVJ/AVBB), Belgium

Borka Rudić, Secretary General of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Journalists Association (BHJA), Bosnia and Herzegovina

Maja Sever, President of the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (TUCJ), Croatia

Hrvoje Zovko, President of the Croatia Journalists' Association (CJA), Croatia

George Frangos, President of the Union of Cyprus Journalists (UCJ), Cyprus

Çağdaş Öğüç, Secretary of International Relations of Basın-Sen, Cyprus

Adam Černý, President of the Syndicate of Journalists of Czech Republic, Czechia

Tine Johansen, President of the Danish Union of Journalists (DJ), Denmark

Helle Tiikmaa, President of the Estonian Union of Journalists (EAL), Estonia

Hanne Aho, President of the Union of Journalists in Finland, Finland

Emmanuel Poupard, Premier Secrétaire général du Syndicat national des journalistes (SNJ), France

Emmanuel Vire, General Secretary of Syndicat national de journalistes CGT (SNJ-CGT), France

Frank Überall, President of the Deutscher Journalisten-Verband (DJV), Germany

Monique Hofmann, Bundesgeschäftsführerin, Deutsche Journalistinnen- und Journalisten-Union (dju) in ver.di, Germany

Maria Antoniadou, President of the Journalists Union of the Athens Daily Newspapers (JUADN), Greece

Elena Rizeakou, President of the Panhellenic Federation of Journalists' Union (PFJU), Greece

Nikolaos Karras, President of the Journalists Union of Macedonia and Thrace (ESIEMTH), Greece

Themistoklis Beredimas, President of the Periodical and Electronic Press Union (P.E.P.U), Greece

László M. Lengyel, Executive Chairman of the Hungarian Press Union (HPU), Hungary

Raffaele Lorusso, General Secretary of the Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana (FNSI), Italy

Anna Del Freo, Deputy General Secretary of the FNSI, Italy

Dainius Radzevičius, President of the Lithuanian Journalists' Union (LŽS), Lithuania

Ines Kurschat, President of the Association Luxembourgeoise des Journalistes Professionnels (ALJP), Luxembourg

Nigel Mifsud, General Secretary of the Institute of Maltese Journalists (IGM), Malta

Renske Heddema, President of the Nederlandse Vereniging van Journalisten (NVJ), The Netherlands

Zvezdan Georgievski, president of Independent Trade Union of Journalists and Media Workers (SSNM), North Macedonia

Dag Idar Tryggestad, President of the Norwegian Union of Journalists, Norway

Krzysztof Skowroński, President of the Polish Association of Journalists (SDP), Poland

Seweryn Blumsztajn, President of the Society of Journalists, Poland

Sofia Branco, President of Sindicato dos Jornalistas (SJ), Portugal

Leonard Octavian Pădureț, President of the Federation Culture & Mass-Media FAIR-MediaSind, Romania

Cristinel Godinac, President of the Romanian Trade Union of Journalists MediaSind, Romania

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Zeljko Bodrozić, President of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (IJAS-NUNS), Serbia

Dragana Čabarkapa, President of the Journalist Union of Serbia (Sinos), Serbia

Daniel Modrovsky, President of Slovensky Syndikat Novinarov (SSN), Slovakia

Petra Lesjak Tušek, President of the Slovene Association of Journalists (DNS), Slovenia

Nemesio Rodríguez, President of the Federación de Asociaciones de Periodistas de España (FAPE), Spain

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Mariano Rivero Puche, Coordinator of AgP-UGT (FeSMC-UGT), Spain

Ulrika Hyllert, President of the Swedish Journalists' Union (SJ), Sweden

Dr. Franca Siegfried, President of impressum, Swiss Journalists' Federation, Switzerland

Stephanie Vonarburg, Vice-President of syndicom, Switzerland

Mustafa Kuleli, General Secretary of Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası (TGS), Turkey

Yusuf Kanli, Vice-Chairman of Gazeteciler Cemiyeti Derneği (GCD), Turkey

Özge Yurttaş, General Secretary of DİSK Basın İş, Turkey

Sergiy Tomilenko, President of the National Union of journalists of Ukraine (NUJU), Ukraine

Serhiy Shturkhetskyy, Chairman of the Independent Media Trade-Union of Ukraine (IMTUU), Ukraine

Michelle Stanistreet, National Union of Journalists General Secretary (NUJ), United Kingdom