



February 23, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Chuck
Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House
United States House of
Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office
Building
Washington, DC 20515

Your Excellency President Joseph Biden, The United States of America

Dear Senate Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker McCarthy, US Congress

We, organizations, movements and initiatives representing the citizens of the Republic of Belarus, collectively the organization “Belarus Democratic Forum”, represent the people of Belarus, are working to help the people of Belarus eliminate the tyrannical Lukashenko regime.

Because of the accession of the Republic of Belarus to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1994, the United States, Great Britain and Russia undertook obligations to guarantee the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Belarus. Presently, there is a threat from Russia to the sovereignty of Belarus. Over the past three years, as recorded by multiple international organizations, more than fifty thousand people have been repressed for political reasons in Belarus. According to data from human rights groups, there are about 1,500 political prisoners in Belarus; however, in reality, there are up to 5,000 of them. Finally, dozens of people were killed by representatives of the Lukashenko regime for nothing more than expressing their political opposition.

Lukashenko continues to publicly threaten the abductions and elimination of political opponents in exile. Inside Belarus, human rights are grossly violated and the legal system has been destroyed and arbitrariness reigns. The dictatorship in Belarus threatens the international community. Lukashenko’s regime is a grave challenge not only to the people of Belarus but also to Europe and the United States. Since 2021, the Belarusian regime constantly supports, facilitates, and often instigates illegal migration and human trafficking from Africa to Europe. It has committed a well-documented crime against the security of civil aviation by hijacking a civilian Ryanair aircraft for the purpose of kidnapping an opposition activist, which has been recognized as an international law violation by ICAO. The militarization of the country and the possible placement of Russian nuclear weapons on its territory increases the risk of a major war in Europe and around the world. These developments increase the likelihood that neighboring countries can be attacked from the territory of Belarus, as is currently evidenced in the war against Ukraine.

We therefore urge you to:

1. Jointly, with the countries of the European Union, issue an ultimatum to Mr. Lukashenko to release all political prisoners, or else all cargo traffic from Belarus to EU countries will be blocked. Furthermore, to take immediate and exhaustive measures to ensure the evacuation of all political hostages to safe countries.
2. Provide resource and financial support for the organization of online elections of the representative body (National Council) of the people of Belarus during its transition period. This will contribute to the formation of a legitimate democratic institution and the consolidation of all democratic forces around basic principles and values.
3. To declare citizen A.G. Lukashenko a terrorist and his regime a terrorist organization according to the Geneva Declaration on Terrorism of March 21, 1987.
4. To initiate a criminal case in the United States against citizen A.G. Lukashenko and others involved in crimes the under the article "genocide and unleashing war against Ukraine".
5. Adopt an updated sanctions package against citizen A.G. Lukashenko and his family members, including a ban on international flights for servicing Boeing aircrafts in state possession.
6. To impose sanctions on companies and individuals who circumvent previously imposed sanctions, including the port of "Bronka" in the Leningrad region, provided by Russia to the government of Belarus, as well as foreign ships used to export products.
7. To impose sanctions on all state TV and radio channels of Belarus in order to block on YouTube the spread of disinformation, and the incitement of hatred and hostility.
8. Provide assistance to the repressed citizens of Belarus and their families, as well as support for sociological, economic, political researchers, independent journalists, and students studying at U.S. universities.
9. Hold U.S. Congressional hearings on the situation in Belarus, with the participation of the last legitimate chairman of the Supreme Soviet (parliament) of Belarus Syamyon Sharetsky, presidential candidates of all years, opinion leaders, etc.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Valery Tsepka,

First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1994-1997), Ambassador of Belarus to the United States (1997-2002), Director of the Belarusian High-Tech Park (2005-2017), Candidate for the Presidency of Belarus (2020) and other Candidates of the 2020 election who are now in prison as well as other participants of the Belarus Democratic Forum