



## **Statement of Ireland**

### **48th session of the Human Rights Council**

*Interactive Dialogue on the interim oral update of OHCHR on the situation of human rights in Belarus*

**24 September**

Ireland aligns with the statement of the EU and we thank the High Commissioner for her report.

More than a year since thousands of peaceful protesters took to the streets following the falsified results of presidential elections, the illegitimate regime continues ruling Belarus through fear and by deploying widespread state violence against its own people.

Ireland strongly condemns the systematic oppression of media freedoms and of civil society. We condemn, in particular, the repression of human rights defenders by the Lukashenko regime through arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances. These violations must cease immediately and perpetrators must be held to account. It is vital that our coordinated international focus remains on supporting the Belarusian people in their determined defence of democratic principles and ensuring respect for their human rights.

Ireland stresses the vital importance of civil society space to ensure full enjoyment of human rights. We urge the Belarusian authorities to reverse the amendments to the Laws on Mass Media, Mass Gatherings and the Code of Administrative Offences, as well as other regulations that curtail civil society's ability to express and voice opinions. Ireland calls on the immediate and unconditional release of detained human rights defenders and media workers.

Madame High Commissioner, in your view, what further practical support can the international community provide to help protect human rights in Belarus?

Thank you.